

**POIR 555:  
Democracy and Democratization in Comparative Perspective**

**Fall 2023**

When: W 5:00-7:50 p.m.  
Where: DMC 105  
Office Hours: M 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
or by appointment

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**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 we consider some early theorizing and, in more detail, various schools of thought that flourished after World War II. We end by considering some new areas of research, related to the state, the nation and democratic backsliding. The overall aim of the seminar is to learn about concepts, theories and empirical tests in the field of democracy studies.

**Requirements**

i) *Three analytical essays* (30% of the final grade). These short essays (5 to 7 double-spaced pages) on all the readings for one week will be due, at the latest, by Wednesday at 4 p.m. in my mailbox in VKC 330 or in the email inbox. *Under no conditions can papers used in other classes be used for this class.*

ii) *Five précis* (20% of the final grade). These short (1-page) analytical summaries will focus on one of the readings (not covered in the three analytical essays) and will be due, at the latest, by Wednesday at 4 p.m. in my mailbox in VKC 330 or in the email inbox. *Under no conditions can papers used in other classes be used for this class.*

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

iv) *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

### Introduction

#### Meeting 1: Introduction (August 23)

Basic ideas about social science research. The contents and requirements of the course. Analytical essays. Stylized facts about the history of democracy.

*Background reading:* I will assume that you have some basic knowledge about the history of democracy. For a brief overview, see Adam Przeworski, "A Brief History of Representative Institutions," Ch. 3 in Przeworski, *Democracy and the Limits of Self-Government*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Other useful sources are: Samuel P. Huntington, "What?" Ch. 1 in Huntington, *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991; and John Markoff, *Waves of Democracy: Social Movements and Political Change*, 2nd Edition. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2015.

### The Nature and Value of Democracy: Arguing About Democracy

#### Meeting 2: The Concept of Democracy (August 30)

Pre-World War II thinking about the nature of democracy. Schumpeter's critique of the classical conception of democracy. Schumpeter's alternative. A procedural conception of democracy. Dahl's approach to democracy: principles and "institutions."

Munck, Gerardo L. 2023. *Reimagining the Social Sciences: Knowledge, Epistemic Change, and the Study of Democracy*, book manuscript, Ch. 2, "Conceptualizing Modern Democracy." [Read pages 72-94.]

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.]

Dahl, Robert A. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press. [Read only Chapters 8 and 9, and pp. 220-22.]

Munck, Gerardo L. 2023. *Reimagining the Social Sciences: Knowledge, Epistemic Change, and the Study of Democracy*, book manuscript, Ch. 4, "Democratic Theory and Concept Formation." [Read pages 142-69.]

#### Meeting 3: The Value of Democracy (September 6)

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 peacefully.

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.]

Przeworski, Adam. 2018. *Why Bother with Elections?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. [Read Part II, "What Elections Can and Cannot Achieve."]

On the nature and value of democracy, you may want to check out a few of my tweets: on nature and value, by Kelsen – <https://twitter.com/GerardoMunck/status/1651180107439173633> ; by Dahl <https://twitter.com/GerardoMunck/status/1651907286108114944> ; by Przeworski - <https://twitter.com/GerardoMunck/status/1653000649154478080> and by O'Donnell - <https://twitter.com/GerardoMunck/status/1653719456391266304> On arguing for democracy: <https://twitter.com/GerardoMunck/status/1575139886608240646> and <https://twitter.com/gerardomunck/status/1576584861036335105?lang=bn>

### **The Origins and Endurance of Democracy: Initial Theorizing and Post-World War II Schools of Thought**

#### **Meeting 4: Pre-World War II Thinking: Economics, Culture, Politics and International Factors (September 13)**

- Smith, Adam. 1869 [1763]. *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms, delivered in the University of Glasgow, by Adam Smith*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press. [Read page 107 and the first half of 108 on idea of four stages of society.]
- Smith, Adam. 1904 [1776]. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1. London, UK: Methuen. [Read Book III, Chs. 3 and 4, pp. 371-94.]
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2010 [1835]. *Democracy in America* Vol. 2 Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund. [Read the part that focuses on the “habits and mores” on pages 466-72.]
- Hintze, Otto. 1975 [1902]. “The Formation of States and Constitutional Development: A Study in History and Politics,” pp. 157-77, in Felix Gilbert (ed.), *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Veblen, Thorstein. 1915. *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution*. London, UK: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. [Read starting with first full paragraph on page 61 to the top of page 62, all of Chapter 6, and from the bottom of page 240 through the middle of page 245.]
- Munck, Gerardo L. 2023. *Reimagining the Social Sciences: Knowledge, Epistemic Change, and the Study of Democracy*, book manuscript, Ch. 3, “Explaining Modern Democracy.” [Read pages 103-31.]

#### **Meeting 5: Modernization Theory: Economic Development (September 20)**

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 about the economic determinants of democracy. The distinction between the origins and stability of democracy.

Lerner, Daniel. 1968. “Modernization. Social Aspects,” pp. 386-95. in David L. Sills (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol. 10. New York: The Macmillan Company & the Free Press.

- Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53(1): 69-105.
- Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49(2): 155-83.
- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, James A. Robinson, and Pierre Yared. 2008. "Income and Democracy." *American Economic Review* 98(3): 808-42.
- Munck, Gerardo L. 2018. "Modernization Theory as a Case of Failed Knowledge Production." *Comparative Democratization (APSA-CD)* 16(3): 37-41.

### **Meeting 6: Power Structure Theory: Class, State and the State System** (September 27)

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.

- Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press. [Read the Preface and Chapter 7 closely, and skim Chapters 8 and 9.]
- Huber, Evelyne, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens. 1993. "The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7(3): 71-85.
- Tilly, Charles. 1998. "Where Do Rights Come From?" pp. 55-72, in Theda Skocpol (ed.), *Democracy, Revolution, and History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mazzuca, Sebastián. 2010. "Macrofoundations of Regime Change: Democracy, State Formation, and Capitalist Development," *Comparative Politics* 43(1): 1-19.

### **Meeting 7: Political Institutional Theory I: Political Actors and Strategic Choices** (October 4)

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.

- Rustow, Dankwart. 1970. "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model." *Comparative Politics* 2(3): 337-63.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo, and Philippe Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

### **Meeting 8: Political Institutional Theory II: Political Institutions and Ruling Coalitions** (October 11)

A focus on elites and institutions. The old regime and its impact. The durability of authoritarian regimes.

- Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. [Read Chapters 3 and 4.]
- Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press; Ch. 8, "Why Dictatorships Fall."
- Gandhi, Jennifer, and Ellen Lust-Okar. 2009. "Elections under Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 403-22.
- Miller, Michael K. 2015. "Democratic Pieces: Autocratic Elections and Democratic Development since 1815." *British Journal of Political Science* 45(3): 501-30.

### **Meeting 9: Political Economy Theory: Economic Inequality and Redistribution (October 18)**

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, Haggard and Kaufman).

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).]

Houle, Christian. 2009. "Inequality and Democracy: Why Inequality Harms Consolidation but Does Not Affect Democratization." *World Politics* 61(4): 589–622.

Haggard, Stephan, and Robert R. Kaufman. 2012. "Inequality and Regime Change: Democratic Transitions and the Stability of Democratic Rule." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 495-516.

### **New Areas of Research: State, Nation, Quality of Democracy, and Democratic Backsliding**

#### **Meeting 10: The Long-Term I. The State and Quality of Democracy (October 25)**

How does the formation of states and state building affect, or interact, with regimes and democracy? Conceptual matters again: expanding the dependent variable, from democracy to high-capacity democracy. Explanatory matters: prerequisites again?

Fukuyama, Francis. 2014. *Political Order and Political Decay. From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. [Read Chs. 1 and 2.] Focus on arguments about the sequencing between the development of a bureaucratic state and the origins of democracy.]

Tilly, Charles. 2007. *Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Ch. 7, "7. Alternative Paths."

Mazucca, Sebastián L., and Gerardo L. Munck. 2020. *A Middle-quality Institutional Trap: Democracy and State Capacity in Latin America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

**Meeting 11: The Long-Term II. Nation, Ethnic Politics and Democracy**  
(November 1)

How does nationalism and nation-building affect ethnic politics and democracy?

Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Meeting 12: Post-Cold War Patterns I. De-Democratization** (November 8)

The debate about patterns in the state of democracy since the end of the Cold War. Is there a democratic recession? Thinking about democratic backsliding or erosion.

Treisman, Daniel. 2023. "How Great is the Current Danger to Democracy? Assessing the Risk With Historical Data." *Comparative Political Studies* 0(0).

Little, Andrew, and Meng, Anne. 2023. "Measuring Democratic Backsliding," July 18, 2023. Forthcoming in *PS: Political Science & Politics*.

Knutsen, Carl Henrik et al. 2023. "Conceptual and Measurement Issues in Assessing Democratic Backsliding." *V-Dem Working Paper* 2023:140. Forthcoming in *PS: Political Science & Politics*.

**Meeting 13: Post-Cold War Patterns II. De-Democratization** (November 15)

How do we start to make sense of the sense that democracy is in crisis? How can we explain instances of democratic backsliding?

Przeworski, Adam. 2019. *Crises of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Meeting # 14:** No class. Thanksgiving Holiday (November 22)

### Taking Stock

**Meeting 15: Assessing Democracy Studies** (November 29)

What have we learned about democracy? Which are the main advances in knowledge? What are the areas where progress has not been made? What are the most fruitful ways to contribute further to the literature?

## A Comprehensive Bibliography

### Classic and Recent Works on the Nature and Value of Democracy

- Kelsen, Hans. 2013 [1929]. *The Essence and Value of Democracy*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Schumpeter, Joseph. 1942. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Kelsen, Hans. 1945. *General Theory of Law and State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kelsen, Hans. L. 1955. "Foundations of Democracy." *Ethics* 66(1): 1-101.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago, IL.: University of Chicago Press.
- Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Macpherson, C.B. 1973. *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Macpherson, C.B. 1977. *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bobbio, Norberto. 1989 [1980]. *Democracy and Dictatorship: The Nature and Limits of State Power*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bobbio, Norberto. 1987 [1984]. *The Future of Democracy: A Defense of the Rules of The Game*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Held, David. 1987. *Models of Democracy*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press.
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1987. *The Theory of Democracy Revisited Part 1: The Contemporary Debate*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers.
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1987. *The Theory of Democracy Revisited Part 2: The Classical Issues*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.
- Hanson, Russell L. 1989. "Democracy," pp. 68-89, in Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson (eds.), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 1996. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Collier, David and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49(3): 430-51.
- Saward, Michael. 1998. *The Terms of Democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1999. *Counterpoints: Selected Essays on Authoritarianism and Democratization*. Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Przeworski, Adam. 1999. "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense," pp. 23-55, in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds.), *Democracy's Value*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Przeworski, Adam, Bernard Manin, and Susan Stokes (eds.). 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 2001. "Democracy, Law, and Comparative Politics." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36(1): 7-36.

- Maravall, José María and Adam Przeworski (eds.). 2003. *Democracy and the Rule of Law*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Merkel, Wolfgang. 2004. "Embedded and Defective Democracies." *Democratization* 11(1): 33-58.
- Dunn, John. 2005. *Setting the People Free: The Story of Democracy*. London: Atlantic Books.
- McGann, Anthony J. 2006. *The Logic of Democracy: Reconciling Equality, Deliberation, and Minority Protection*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Bellamy, Richard. 2007. *Political Constitutionalism: A Republican Defense of the Constitutionality of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 2007. *Dissonances: Democratic Critiques of Democracy*. Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mazucca, Sebastián. 2010. "Access to Power Versus Exercise of Power: Reconceptualizing the Quality of Democracy in Latin America." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45(3): 334-57.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 2010. *Democracy, Agency, and the State: Theory with Comparative Intent*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2010. *Democracy and the Limits of Self-Government*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. 2nd. Ed. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.
- Munck, Gerardo L. 2016. "What is Democracy? A Reconceptualization of the Quality of Democracy." *Democratization* 23(1): 1-26.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2018. *Why Bother With Elections?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Doorenspleet, Renske. 2019. *Rethinking the Value of Democracy. A Comparative Perspective*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

### **Classic and Recent Works on the Explanation of Democracy**

- Montesquieu, Charles Louis de Secondat, baron de. 1989 [1748]. *The Spirit of the Laws*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Adam. 1869 [1763]. *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms, delivered in the University of Glasgow, by Adam Smith*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Smith, Adam. 1904 [1776]. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: Methuen.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2010 [1835]. *Democracy in America*. Indianapolis, In: Liberty Fund.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2010 [1840]. *Democracy in America*. Indianapolis, In: Liberty Fund.
- Mill, John Stuart. 1977 [1861]. *Considerations on Representative Government*, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. 19. *Essays on Politics and Society Part II*, ed. John M. Robson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hintze, Otto. 1975 [1902]. "The Formation of States and Constitutional Development: A Study in History and Politics," pp. 157-77, in Felix Gilbert (ed.), *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. New York: Oxford University Press.



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- Weber, Max. 1927 [1923]. *General Economic History*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
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- Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.
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- Lipset, Seymour M. 1960. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books.
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- de Schweinitz, Karl. 1964. *Industrialization and Democracy: Economic Necessities and Political Possibilities*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf. 1967 [1965]. *Society and Democracy in Germany*. New York: Doubleday.
- Eckstein, Harry. 1966. *A Theory of Stable Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rustow, Dankwart A. 1967. *A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization*. Washington: Brookings Institution.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1968. *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California.
- Nordlinger, Eric A. 1968. "Political Development: Time Sequences and Rates of Change." *World Politics* 20(3): 494-520.
- Rokkan, Stein. 1968. "The Structuring of Mass Politics in the Smaller European Democracies: A Developmental Typology." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 10(2): 173-210.
- Rustow, Dankwart. 1970. "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model." *Comparative Politics* 2(3): 337-63.
- Rokkan, Stein, with Angus Campbell, Per Torsvik and Henry Valen. 1970. *Citizens, Elections, and Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development*. New York: David McKay.
- Binder, Leonard, James S. Coleman, Joseph LaPalombara, Lucian W. Pye, Sidney Verba, and Myron Weiner. 1971. *Crises and Sequences in Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
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- Linz, Juan J. 2000 [1975]. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Boulder, Col: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
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- Bates, Robert and Da-Hsiang Donald Lien. 1985. "A Note on Taxation, Development, and Representative Government." *Politics and Society* 14(1): 53-70.
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- Snyder, Jack. 2000. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York: Norton. [Read only Chapter 1, "Transitions to Democracy and the Rise of Nationalist Conflict."]
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