

DEMOCRATIZATION

INTS 4075
Syllabus

Instructor: Timothy D. Sisk, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, GSIS, University of Denver
tsisk@du.edu

Class Meets: Wednesdays, 9:00am-11:50am
January 4-March 8, 2006
Ben Cherrington Hall, Room 310

Synopsis

Since the mid-1970s, the world has seen an ongoing wave of democratization. Some 70 countries have undergone transitions to democracy since the 1970s, with some 40 countries having gone through such a transition in the 1990s and early 2000's. With public demonstrations and demands for further democratization in places like Egypt, Hong Kong, Georgia, Liberia, Ukraine, Togo, and Lebanon capturing headlines in 2005, it is fair to say that the dramatic trends toward democracy in recent years continues; particularly, if the call for wider democracy throughout the Middle East continues, as in Palestine, then there is every reason to expect more instances of democratization in years ahead.

The democratization trends of the 1990s that continues today raise a number of important retrospective questions about the underlying drivers of democratization, the various paths that countries go through on the road to democracy, whether such changes are sustainable over time (and why or why not). The very word "transition" is rightly questioned: Is there is a proverbial point of no return when democracy is "consolidated" and country goes from the transitional category to a fully formed democracy? While democratization may lead to peace over time, the actual process of political reform is destabilizing for societies, and that in the short term there may be real and direct threats to peace in democratizing societies as a result of the uncertainty and competition that democracy introduces into restive social environments.

The course explores *democratization* – the means and methods by which countries in recent years have moved from a non-democratic to democratic regime type. What theories, concepts, and methods should be used to understand democracy and democratization in today's complex, multiethnic societies? Topics include:

- Theories and methods for assessing transitions from authoritarian rule;
- Case studies in democracy and democratization drawn from the "Third Wave" of countries that have made often turbulent and sometimes violent transitions;
- Institutional and procedural options for improving the viability, quality, and sustainability of democracy in countries where the conditions favorable for a pluralistic society are distinctly absent; and
- Special problems of democracy in multiethnic and post-war societies, where democratization is pursued as a method of conflict management.

This course is designed for upper-level graduate students; ideally, students should have some knowledge of basic approaches and methods in comparative politics. The course will feature presentations by the instructor, seminar-style discussion, and a special two-day capstone seminar featuring presentations by all course participants. Students will develop their own topical and country specializations and will conduct a comprehensive democracy assessment as the principal assignment for the course.

Design

Part I: Concepts and Methods

We begin with a consideration of basic meanings and applications of democracy, a sober and realistic look at the current state of the “Third Wave” of democratization, intersections between ethnicity and politics, and an analysis of the principal scholarly explanations for democratization processes. We will emphasize the onset and sequencing of democratization processes, the notion of critical turning points, the concept of founding elections, and the analysis of democratic development toward a normative goal of sustainability. The principal subtopics are:

- Democracy in theory and practice
- Democracy in multiethnic societies
- Democratization processes: contingencies and pathways
- Democracy assessment methodologies

Part II: Topics

The second portion of the course investigates several enduring topics in the study of democratization. We will analyze these components of democratization.

- Institutional choice and constitutional engineering
- Elections and party systems
- Civil society and participation
- Democracy at the local level

During this part of the course, we will also be investigating specific case studies and perusing comparative analysis to illustrate these topics. We will also emphasize new directions in virtual democracy, or the application of information and communication technologies to promote facilitation, and the possibilities for enhancing the quality of democracy through online media. Toward this end, we will make extensive use of the wealth of material available from non-governmental organizations and international organizations available online.

Part III: Prospects for the Future

Part III, is a synthesis of our collaborative learning. We will analyze the lessons learned from our topical and case-oriented look at democratization by conducting a democracy assessment on a case study of the student’s choice and evaluating external efforts at democracy building.

- Lessons learned from democratization processes
- Evaluating the democratic peace theory
- The democracy-promotion global public policy network

In Part III, all course participants (students, the instructor, and other contributors) will present the result their research in a one-day capstone seminar. Students will present in teams based on the themes and cases of their research, drawing lessons from each other’s findings and arguments.

Course Requirements and Grading

The student's primary responsibility is to be fully prepared and participate in the seminar discussions. This requirement involves reading the course material in advance, conducting some independent fact-finding, and contributing to class deliberations in a concise, informed manner.

Grades will be determined by evaluation of student performance in the following three categories.

- *Class participation.* Active participation includes regular and prompt attendance, preparedness, involvement in course and tutorial discussions, and contributions to the analysis of course topics. (10% of grade)
- *Topic Analysis Report.* A five-page report on a topic within the overall democratization field; a list of possible topics will be circulated in class; all topic analysis reports will be presented by the student in class together with a one-page summary of the key points (20% of grade).
- *Current Events Analysis Report.* Each course participant will select a current events topic of interest for presentation in class together with a three-page "tip sheet" on the event; analysis of the event employing theoretical approaches and findings from the democratization field is a key component of this assignment. (20% of grade).
- *Reading Evaluation Reports.* Each student should prepare a brief analytical summary of each week's readings; class sessions 2-7 apply for this purpose (for class session 4, see the State of Democracy reports; for class period 7, choose one of the two books). (20% of grade).
- *Democracy assessment report.* The democracy assessment report (13-15 pages) should be a well-considered analysis of a case study of the student's choosing. The purpose of the report is to facilitate more detailed inquiry into a specific topic of special interest to the student, with the aim of developing skills for critical analysis, methodological rigor, and professional, team-based presentation of the findings and conclusions. (Written product 30% of the grade)

Course Texts & Materials

Robert A. Dahl, 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Beetham, David, Sarah Bracking, Iain Kearton, and Stuart Weir. 2002. *International IDEA Handbook on Democracy Assessment*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). 2002. *State of Democracy: Trends from the Pilot Countries*. Stockholm: International IDEA. See the country-level studies at <http://www.idea.int/sod/index.htm>.

International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). 1998. *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*. Stockholm: International IDEA. Available at http://www.idea.int/publications/democracy_and_deep_rooted_conflict/home.htm.

Recommended for background reading:

Georg Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization: Process and Prospects in a Changing World*, 2nd edition Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.

Class Schedule & Readings

Class Period #1 Introduction, Course Overview

January 4

Presentation: Governance, the MDGs, and Human Security in the 21st Century

See the UNDP Democratic Governance web site at:

<http://www.undp.org/governance/>

PART I: CONCEPTS & METHODS

Class Period #2 Contemporary Democracy in Theory and Practice

January 11

Dahl, Robert A. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Part I, “The Sources of Modern Democracy,” and Part Two “Adversarial Critics”.

Handout: “Democratic Practice: Managing Power, Identity, and Difference”

Recommended: Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization* (entire book).

Case Study: Israel, “Citizen Bishara” [3045]

Class Period #3 Democratization Processes

January 18

Dahl, Robert A. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Part III, “A Theory of the Democratic Process,” and Part IV, “Problems in the Democratic Process.”

Dankwart A. Rustow, 1970, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics* 2 (3): 337-63. [JSTOR]

Handout: “Democratization and Peace”

See Stanford’s comparative democratization project at democracy.stanford.edu; See the Freedom House survey at www.freedomhouse.org/research/index.htm

Case Study: “Chile: Defeat of a Dictator” [2474]

Class Period #4 Democracy Assessment Methods

January 25

Beetham, David, Sarah Bracking, Iain Kearton, and Stuart Weir. 2002. *International IDEA Handbook on Democracy Assessment*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), 2002. *State of Democracy: Trends from the Pilot Countries*.

Informal assignment:

Review the democracy assessments of Guatemala, Burkina Faso, Romania, Indonesia, or Nigeria from International IDEA. (Available at www.idea.int); see the State of Democracy project at www.idea.int/democracy/sod.cfm

Handout: “When Democracy Falters”

PART II: TOPICS

Class Period #5 Dilemmas of Democratization in War-Torn Societies

February 2

See the essay “Democracy and Conflict Management” at: http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/democ_con_manag.jsp

International IDEA, *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict*, Chapter 4, “Democratic Levers for Conflict Management”

Handout: “Democracy in War-Torn Societies”

Case Study: Yugoslavia, “*Otpor! Bringing Down a Dictator*”

Class Period #6 Elections and Conflict Management
February 15

See the UNDP, IFES and IDEA ACE (Administration and Cost of Elections) project at www.aceproject.org

Arend Lijphart, "Electoral Systems: Types, Patterns, and Trends," (Chapter 2) and "Electoral Engineering: Limits and Possibilities," *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies 1945-1990*.

Andrew Reynolds and Ben Reilly, 2004. *The New International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design* (Stockholm: International IDEA).

Arend Lijphart, 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Roundtable Discussion: Elections in Palestine and Iraq

Case Analysis: Minorities in the US: Lani Guanier and "Democracy in a Different Voice," # 667

Class Period #7 Democracy at the Local Level
February 22

See Timothy D. Sisk, *Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Representation, Participation, Conflict Management and Governance* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2001

(available at

www.idea.int/publications/democracy_at_local_level/index.htm)

"The Challenge of Slums: UN Habitat's Human Settlement Report 2003" available at www.unchsh.org/global_report.asp

Case Study: "Mexico City: The Impossible City" JV7402 .M49 2005 DVD

Case Study: Political Reform in China

PART III: PROSPECTS

Class Period #8 Evaluating the Democracy-Promotion Global Public Policy Network
March 1

Two Book Reports:

Beyond Free and Fair, Eric Bjornlund (Johns Hopkins University Press)

Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion, Thomas Carothers, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004).

Capstone Seminar: Lessons Learned in Democratization Processes, Part I

Class Period #9 Capstone Seminar: Lessons Learned in Democratization Processes, Part II
March 8

Course Summary and Overview