

POLI 4060-1: Democracy in Crisis?

T/TH: 1:30-2:50pm

Locations: Online (Lecture); 102 Stubbs (Lab)

Professor: Dr. Yann Kerevel

Office Hours: By Appointment Only (email to schedule a Zoom meeting)

Office: 230 Stubbs

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Overview

The spread of democracy has come in waves throughout history. The third wave of democracy, which began in the late 1970s, saw the spread of democracy to most regions of the world. However, in recent years, analysts have argued democracy is in retreat in many new and old democracies. The first part of this course examines this “crisis of democracy” by looking at changes in the quality of democracy across countries and over time, how democracies breakdown and collapse, and the role of parties and public opinion in maintaining democracy.

In addition to claims that the quality of democracy is declining in many areas of the world, old groups that had previously been incorporated into the political system are claiming they are poorly represented, while newer previously marginalized groups are mobilizing for greater incorporation. The second part of the course examines this “crisis of representation” by examining arguments for greater inclusion, and the consequences of the inclusion and exclusion of particular groups on democratic representation.

This course is primarily designed to introduce students to the empirical examination of the state of democracy throughout the world, with class time being divided between lecture and time in a computer lab. Each student will be assigned a different country to study throughout the course.

Course Format

The majority of the course will be conducted online, asynchronously. You can complete readings/lectures at any time during the week. You will have assigned readings for each week, and I will upload short lectures to accompany the readings. You will have to complete short assignments/quizzes each week in response to the week’s material. Generally, the weekly assignments will open on Mondays, and close the following Monday.

In addition to the online component of the class, we will meet in-person in the computer lab in 102 Stubbs during the scheduled time of the course to learn how to use STATA and complete a

series of lab assignments. Attendance in the lab will be limited to 10 students. You will have four lab assignments to complete by Thanksgiving break. You can work at your own pace, and once you complete all 4 assignments, you do not need to continue to attend lab. I will organize a lab rotation so all students have equal access to the lab throughout the semester. You should expect to attend lab about 3 times/month.

Required Materials

- All assigned readings are provided in PDF format on Moodle.
- You need a USB drive to save your lab work throughout the course

Evaluation

2 exams: 40%

There will be two exams throughout the semester, each worth 20% of your grade. The exams are not cumulative, and will be based on content from lectures and assigned readings. Prior to each exam I will provide you with a study guide. All exams will be online, but must be taken on the specified day.

Lab assignments: 20%

Throughout the course you will be given four lab assignments to compare the attitudes of individuals in your assigned country to other countries as well as to different groups within your assigned country. At the beginning of the course I will introduce you to the World Values Survey, a public opinion data set with survey data from nearly 50 countries. I will teach you some very basic skills that will allow you to draw information from this very large data set using STATA. I will also show you how to create some tables and graphs within Excel to present this information. Each lab assignment is worth 5% of your grade. You may use the results of each assignment in your final paper.

If we are forced to switch to a completely online course during the semester, I will grade any completed lab assignments. For any uncompleted lab assignments, I will redistribute the unearned points equally across the other assignments (exam, weekly quizzes/responses, final paper).

Weekly quizzes/responses: 15%

You will be asked to complete short quizzes/responses each week to demonstrate you have completed the readings and watched the lectures. These will generally open on Mondays, and close the following Monday.

Final paper: 25%

Students are required to write an original 9-10 page paper on the quality of democracy in their assigned country. Students will be expected to cover the following questions: how have NGO ratings of democracy changed over time in your country? How widespread is support for democracy and democratic institutions? Is the party system stable? How well are relevant

marginalized groups represented in formal democratic institutions? What are the primary challenges to maintaining/strengthening/deepening democracy in your country?

Grading scale:

97.0 to 100 A+, 93.0 to 96.9 A, 90.0 to 92.9 A-, 87.0 to 89.9 B+, 83.0 to 86.9 B, 80.0 to 82.9 B-, 77.0 to 79.9 C+, 73.0 to 76.9 C, 70.0 to 72.9 C-, 67.0 to 69.9 D+, 63.0 to 66.9 D, 60.0 to 62.9 D-, below 60.0 F

Other Policies

Students requiring special accommodation:

Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225)578-5919.

General Statement on Academic Integrity:

Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU.

Plagiarism and Citation Method:

As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation methods for all coursework. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate, please consult with the library's tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and proper citation formats.

Schedule of Required Readings & Lectures

Each week, there will be several video lectures to accompany the readings. These videos and assigned readings are available on Moodle. Some reading assignments may change. If so, the professor will notify the class and update the syllabus with sufficient notice.

Week 1: Introduction

- 8/25(T): First Class on Zoom to go over course format
- Tasks to complete:
 - Complete Lab Questionnaire on Moodle by August 28th
 - Complete Characteristics of Democracy Questionnaire by August 31st.

Week 2: The State of Democracy

- 9/1(T): Lab Group 1
- 9/3(Th): Lab Group 2
- Lecture Topic: What is Democracy?/The State of Democracy
 - Assigned readings:
 - Schmitter and Karl. 1990. "What Democracy is... and is not."
 - Schenkkan and Repucci 2019,
 - Levitsky 2018,
 - Encarnación 2016

Week 3: Support for Democracy

- 9/8(T): Lab Group 3
- 9/10(Th): Lab Group 1
- Lecture Topic: Support for Democracy
 - Assigned readings:
 - Wike and Fetterolf 2018
 - Magalhaes 2014
 - Dahlberg et al. 2015

Week 4: Democratic Breakdown

- 9/15(T): Lab Group 2
- 9/17(Th): Lab Group 3
- Lecture Topic: Democratic Breakdown
 - Assigned Readings:
 - Huq and Ginsberg 2018 (pages 80-142, rest is optional)
 - Thaler 2017

Week 5: Democratic Breakdown and Polarization

- 9/22(T): Lab Group 1
- 9/24(Th): Lab Group 2
- Lecture Topic: Democratic Breakdown in Chile/Polarization and Democracy
 - Assigned readings:
 - Cohen 1994, Chapters 5 & 7
 - McCoy et al. 2018, "Polarization and the Global Crisis of Democracy"

Week 6: Party System Collapse and Transition to Authoritarianism

- 9/29(T): Lab Group 3
- 10/1(Th): Lab Group 1
- Lecture Topic: Democratic Erosion in Venezuela

- Assigned Readings:
 - Morgan 2007
 - Landau 2018

Week 7: Exam #1

- 10/6(T): Lab Group 2
- 10/8(Th): Lab Group 3

Week 8: Improving Representation

- 10/13(T): Lab Group 1
- 10/15(Th): Lab Group 2
- Lecture Topic: Why Descriptive Representation?/Gender Quotas
 - Assigned readings:
 - Mansbridge 2015
 - Bhavnani 2009
 - Mansbridge 2005
 - Clayton & Zetterberg 2018
 - Reynolds 2013

Week 9: Descriptive Representation & Class

- 10/20(T): Lab Group 3
- 10/22(Th): Lab Group 1
- Lecture Topic: Class & Democracy
 - Assigned readings:
 - Barnes and Saxton 2019
 - O'Grady 2019

Week 10: Populism & Economic Inequality

- 10/27(T): Lab Group 2
- 10/29(Th): Lab Group 3
- Lecture Topic: Populism and Radical Parties/Inequality and Democracy
 - Assigned Readings:
 - Olsen 2018 (Germany)
 - Betz 2005 (populism)
 - Solt 2008
 - Piketty 2020 (p. 962-965 on the term populism)
 - WEF 2018 (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/here-are-3-facts-you-need-to-know-about-inequality-and-populism/>)

Week 11: Improving Democracy? Part 1: Open Democracy and Lotteries

- 11/3(T): Lab Group 1
- 11/5(Th): Lab Group 2
- Lecture Topic: Open Democracy/Epistocracy
 - Assigned Readings:
 - Readings from Landemore and Brennan, TBA.

Week 12: Improving Democracy? Part 2: Campaign Finance Reform and Class Quotas

- 11/10(T): Lab Group 3
- 11/12(Th): Lab Group 1
- Lecture Topic: Campaign Finance Reform/Class Quotas
 - Assigned Readings:
 - Cagé 2020, Chapters 9-11

Week 13: Exam #2

- 11/17(T): Lab Group 2
- 11/19(Th): Lab Group 3

Week 14: Thanksgiving

- 11/24: Lab Assignments due.
- 11/26: No class, Thanksgiving

Week 15: Last Week of Classes

- 12/1: work on paper
- 12/3: work on paper

Final Paper Due: Monday December 7, midnight.