Introduction:

While the 20th century has been described as the “age of extremes” (Hobsbawn), defined by totalitarian regimes in Europe and beyond (i.e. communism and fascism), it ended with Francis Fukuyama’s famous exclamation of the “end of history.” With the communist regimes of Eastern Europe all in shambles, many believed that democracy was hegemonic and no longer faced any major political challenge(r)s.

At least since 9/11 we know better. While democracy might be considered the best political regime by the majority of the people in the world, significant minorities continue to challenge ‘real existing democracies’ in their actions and/or goals throughout the world. And democracies strike back, defending themselves against real and perceived threats.

This course will look at the various ways in which contemporary democracies defend themselves against (perceived) political threats. The focus is predominantly upon domestic responses; hence, interstate war will not be studied! We are particularly concerned with the partly normative question: how can liberal democracies defend themselves against extremist challenges without undermining their core values?

The ultimate aim of the course is to come to a deeper understanding of the core values of liberal democracy, to critically assess the various political challenges to liberal democracy, and to identify best practices and develop recommendations of how liberal democracies should respond to a broad variety of political challenge(r)s. We will do this by looking at a variety of different political challenges – from animal rights groups to Jihadi terrorism – and the ways in which different democracies have responded to them.
Readings:

Many of the readings are articles and book chapter, which will be posted on the New-Elc course page well before the relevant class. In addition, we use three (short) books that you are strongly encouraged to buy.

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Dahl)


Course objectives:

☑ To provide students with a conceptual and theoretical foundation to understand the political struggle of contemporary liberal democracies.
☑ To discover and explain the differences and similarities among ‘extremist’ challenges to contemporary democracies.
☑ To discover and explain the differences and similarities among democratic responses to similar extremist challenges.
☑ To help students analyze case studies of extremist challenges and democratic responses.
☑ To identify best practices in the way democracies have responded to various extremist challenges.
☑ To develop the best ways in the way democracies should respond to various extremist challenges.

Teaching Methodology:

☑ Lectures
☑ Class discussions
☑ Student presentations
☑ Film presentations

Classroom Attendance and Activity

This class meets twice a week and attendance is mandatory. You can miss a maximum of three classes (no excuses or notes are necessary,
although a heads-up will be appreciated). All further documented absences will lead to a lower class participation grade (10 points per missed class).

You are expected to have read and reflected upon at least the compulsory readings before the relevant class, to follow key events in radical right politics in the media, and to participate actively in the discussions in class and on the ELC-discussion board.

Course Evaluation:

- Participation (10%)
- Midterm exam (25%)
- Movie reflection paper (15%)
- Class presentation (15%)
- Final exam (35%)

**Participation (10%)**: you are expected to prepare, i.e. read of (and reflect on) at least the required readings for each class, and participate in class in an active, civilized, and well-informed manner. You can also participate in discussions on the New-Elc course page.

**Midterm Exam (25%)**: you will have an in-class midterm exam with will consist of 10 multiple choice and 3 short-answer questions. The exam will be on February, 16.

**Movie reflection paper (15%)**: you have to write a short reflection paper (max. 1,000 words) on the movie “The Battle in Seattle” in light of the academic literature you read in class and beyond. The paper should evaluate the state response in terms of liberal democratic values. Deadline: March, 16.

**Class presentation (15%)**: you will give one presentation on an assigned topic, in which you address a specific threat to liberal democracy, or the response to that threat, on the basis of the compulsory literature as well as minimally three addition academic sources. On the day of the presentation you should submit a short paper (max. 1,000 words) upon which the presentation is based and that list the used academic sources.

**Final exam (35%)**: you will have an in-class final exam, which will consist of 10 multiple choice, 3 short-answer, and one essay question. It will cover all the material we have discussed since the midterm exam. The date is determined by the final exam schedule.

**Academic Integrity:**
As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: [http://www.uga.edu/honesty](http://www.uga.edu/honesty). Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

**Grading:**

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**Some Ground Rules:**

1. **It is not my practice to give incompletes.** However, if there is suitable reason – subject to my approval and supported with appropriate written documentation – an exception to the “no incompletes” rule may be possible. With respect to these first ground rules, *if you have problems in completing assigned work, please let me know about it.*

2. **Laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are not allowed!** Be ready with pen and paper to make notes during the class. If you use any of these banned devices in class, you will be punished with a deduction of **10 points** of your final grade!
3. **You will be expected to attend class regularly, on time, and for the entirety of each class period.** Do not sign up for this class if you have social or other engagements (sports classes, meets, etc) that interfere with the time length of this course.

4. I do not expect that your views and perceptions of these controversial themes are identical with those of your classmates or me, either now or at the completion of the course. This course is a place for the free (and perhaps even heated) exchange of ideas. Thus I expect you to **challenge viewpoints** that differ from your own, but I also expect you to **substantiate your arguments** on the basis of the readings, lectures and discussions.

5. If you need to use outside **reference works**, please consult Joel Krieger, et. al., *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) as a place to start for political terms or concepts – do **not** use Webster or other dictionaries for political science definitions. For outside research sources, please use Galileo. Please do **not** use the notoriously unreliable Wikipedia until or unless this source emphasizes accuracy as much as it does volume and speed.

6. If you believe that you should have received a better grade, please provide an **explanation** to me **in writing** and **within a week** of receiving the grade. I will then grade your **whole** exam/paper again and I will issue a “new” grade, which will be either the same, a higher, or a **lower grade**.

**Important Dates:**

- February, 16  Midterm Exam
- March, 16  Movie Reflection Paper
- TBA  Final Exam

**Finally:**

*THE COURSE SYLLABUS IS A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE COURSE; DEVIATIONS ANNOUNCED TO THE CLASS BY THE INSTRUCTOR MAY (AND MOST PROBABLY WILL) BE NECESSARY!*
THEMATIC OUTLINE

01/05 Introduction
In this introductory class we will discuss the intentions and outline of the course as well as the mutual expectations. We will also assess the students’ backgrounds in the politics of western democracies in general, and challenges to it in particular.

01/10 Challenges to Liberal Democracy
The are many different types of challenges to democracy, depending upon not just the ideology but also the strategy. Each challenge is different and would therefore require another type of response by the state and other actors.

Compulsory Readings:

PART I – ASSESSING THE US CONSTITUTION

01/12 The Framers and the Constitution
To get a better understanding of the complexities of democracy, including the strengths and weaknesses of the specific democratic system of the US, we will read Robert Dahl’s provocative How Democratic is the American Constitution? First, we look at what the Framers (or “Founders”) envisioned.

Compulsory Readings:
Dahl, chapters 1-3 and Appendix A.

01/17 How Does the Constitution Perform?
While things might look perfect on paper, this doesn’t necessarily mean they also perform perfectly in practice. How does the US Constitution perform? Is it indeed the model of democracy the Framers envisioned?

Compulsory Reading:
Dahl, chapter 4-5.

PART II – MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

01/19 Democracy
Having looked at the specific case of the US Constitution, we will now look at what democracy as a generic model means. What are crucial institutions and values?

Compulsory Readings:

01/24 Models of Democracy
Although we often use democracy in a unitary way, as if there is just one democracy, there are different models of democracy. The dominant model, at least within the so-called “Western World”, is that of liberal democracy. Another model, particularly popular within left-wing circles, is so-called “radical democracy.”

Compulsory Readings:

01/26 Manipulating Democracy
Challenges to (liberal) democracy do not only come from the outside, i.e. from “extremists or “terrorist”. Democracy can be manipulated by those in power too. Many forms of manipulation seem fairly harmless but can have great consequences, particularly when combined with other “small” changes.

Compulsory Readings:

02/31 Defending Democracy
Democracies defend themselves in different ways. Some are very open (like the US), while others set strict boundaries (like Germany). There are both ethical and practical aspects to defending democracy, particularly with regard to the role of the state.

Compulsory Readings:
Optional Reading:

PART II – THREATS AND RESPONSES

02/02 Anti-Abortion Activism
At least since Roe vs. Wade in 1973 abortion is one of the most contentious and divisive issues in American politics. On the fringes of this debate has been significant intimidation and violence by extremist individuals and organizations, such as Eric Rudolph, Army of God, and Operation Rescue.

Compulsory Readings:

Optional Reading:

02/07 Responses to Anti-Abortion Activism
While only some anti-abortion activism has been illegal, pro-choice activists and abortion providers have argued that even some legal activities constitute harassment and should be banned, or at the very least restricted. What have been the legal responses and what should they be?

Compulsory Readings:
Further Readings:

02/09 Separatism in Europe
Two of the most enduring terrorist challenges in Europe have been the Basque separatist Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom, ETA) and the Irish nationalist Irish Republican Army (IRA). For decades Britain and Spain have been battling these separatist forces in two bloody ‘civil wars’. What was the essence of the challenge and how did the two states respond? In what way were liberal democratic core values upheld or undermined?

Compulsory Reading:

Further Readings:

02/14 State Responses To Separatist Challenges
For decades Britain and Spain have been battling separatist forces in two bloody ‘civil wars’. How did the two states respond? And in what way were liberal democratic core values upheld or undermined?

Compulsory Reading:

Further Readings:


02/16 Midterm
You will have an in-class midterm exam of 10 multiple choice and 3 short-answer questions. You are not allowed to use books or notes!

02/21 The Anti-Globalization Movement
It is hard to speak of ‘the’ anti-globalization movement, given the diffuse and ever changing coalition of groups and people that mobilize under this broad banner. Nevertheless, anti-globalization groups have demonstrated in cities throughout the world, often leading to massive, if localized, responses from the local state (e.g. Genoa in Italy, Gothenburg in Sweden, Prague in the Czech Republic, and Seattle in the US).

Compulsory Reading:

Additional Readings:

02/23 Policing Anti-Globalization Demonstrations
What can we learn from the way different cities have responded to fairly similar challenge(r)s.
Compulsory Reading:

Additional Readings:

02/28 The Battle in Seattle (7-9 PM)

*Movie: The Battle in Seattle* (2007; 99 min)

Compulsory Reading:

03/02 No Class!!!

03/07 – 09 SPRING BREAK

03/14 Populism
*According to media around the world, 2016 was the year of populism. While populism dates back to the mid-19th century, it has only really become a global phenomenon in the 21st century. This class will discuss the evolution of populism and identify the different types.*

Compulsory Readings:
Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, chapters 1-2

Optional Reading:
Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, chapters 3-4

03/16 State Responses to Populism
Initially, populism held overall positive connotations, particularly in the US, but today it is mostly seen as a threat to democracy. But populism and democracy are not straightforward terms and their relationship is complex and dynamic, rather than simple and static.

Compulsory Readings:
Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, chapters 5-6

Optional Reading:

DEADLINE: Movie reflection paper

03/21 Jihadi Terrorism in Europe
At least since the terrorist attacks on New York City and DC on 9/11 Jihadi terrorism is considered the number 1 threat in Europe and North America. While initially linked to al-Qaeda, recent Jihadi terrorism is more claimed, rather than necessarily organized, by the so-called Islamic State (IS).

Compulsory Readings:

03/23 Responding to Jihadi Terrorism: National Differences
While less spectacular and devastating than the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Europe was hit with some terrorist attacks too. Up until the explosion of attacks in 2015, including in Berlin, Brussels and Paris, the two most notable were the bombings in London (7/7/2005) and Madrid
How did the British and Spanish states respond to these terrorist attacks? And in what way were these responses informed by years of fighting domestic terrorism?

Compulsory Reading:

Additional Readings:

03/28 Animal Liberation Front (ALF) (03/14/2011)
For many the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) is associated with daring nightly rescues of little furry animals. However, the ALF also has a dark side, which includes the threatening of people and the bombing of properties alleged to be involved in animal cruelty.

Compulsory Reading:

Further Readings:

03/30 Responses to Animal Rights Activism
Although the ALF is not often in the news, before 9/11 the British security services considered it to be the biggest domestic threat. In what way does the ALF challenge ‘real existing democracies’ and how have they responded?

Compulsory Readings:

Further Readings:

**04/04 The Lone Wolf: Oklahoma City Bombing & Unabomber**
*While terrorism is mostly linked to secretive organizations, some of the most striking terrorist attacks have been the work of a single individual, a so-called ‘lone wolf’. In the past decades, the two most debated lone wolf terrorists have been Timothy McVeigh, the ‘Oklahoma City Bomber’, and Theodore (Ted) Kaczynski, the Unabomber. Do ‘lone wolves’ constitute a particular danger to liberal democracies.*

Compulsory Reading:

Further Readings:

**04/06 Responding to Lone Wolves**

Compulsory Reading:
Bakker, Edwin and Beatrice de Graaf (2011) “Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: Some CT Approaches Addressed”, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5(5-6).

Further Readings:

**PART III – METHODS**

04/11 The Torture Debate

For decades torture was associated with autocratic regimes in faraway places. The ‘War on Terror’ has changed this. At least since the revelations surrounding the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, torture has become an issue in liberal democracies. Have western countries like the UK and US been involved in torture (direct or indirect)? And is torture acceptable in a liberal democracy?

Debate: Is torture acceptable in a liberal democracy?

**Compulsory Reading:**

**Additional Readings:**


04/13 Torturing Democracy

Movie: Torturing Democracy (2008; 62 min)

Compulsory Reading:

04/18 Extremism on the Internet
The Internet has given a whole new dimension to the struggle of extremists. It can virtually connect isolated individuals, giving them a sense of purpose and strength they would not have had without the Internet. It also creates ‘basement terrorists’, i.e. people attacking websites etc. from their basement computers. And, as a fundamentally international and open network, it is extremely difficult to control by one specific country. So, how to respond?

Debate: Should extremism be banned on the Internet?

Compulsory Reading:


Additional Readings:


04/20 The USA PATRIOT Act
Few recent pieces of legislation have been so hotly debated as the USA PATRIOT Act. The “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001”, as is its full name, was the major legal response to the terrorist attack of 9/11 and have become broadly seen as the victory of the state of security over the rule of law. But is the Patriot Act really at odds with the fundamental values of liberal democracy?

Debate: Is the USA PATRIOT Act in line with liberal democratic values?

Compulsory Reading:

04/25 How Should Liberal Democracies Respond to Threats?