

Democratic Erosion

Fall 2020

INTL 4316

Department of International Affairs
University of Georgia

Professor Megan Turnbull

Class Meeting: T/Th, 3:55-5:10pm, Baldwin Hall 311

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Office Hours: by appointment via zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It is often assumed that once a country achieves a certain level of economic and political development, democratic consolidation is permanent. Recent trends in American and European politics have led some commentators to question this assumption. In this course we will explore the causes and consequences of democratic erosion in comparative and historical perspective, with a focus on better understanding our own unique political moment.

Importantly, this course is *not* intended as a partisan critique of any particular American politician or political party. Rather, it is designed to provide an opportunity for you to engage, critically and carefully, with the claims you have doubtlessly already heard about the state of democracy in the US and elsewhere; to evaluate whether those claims are valid; and, if they are, to consider strategies for mitigating the risk of democratic erosion here and abroad. Readings will address both empirical and normative questions, and will be gleaned from a combination of academic and media sources.

This course is a [cross-university collaboration](#). During the 2020-21 academic year, faculty at dozens of different institutions will teach elements from the same syllabus at roughly the same time. Students at all participating universities will collaborate on a number of assignments, and will be expected to engage not only with their own classmates, but with students at other universities as well.

This course aims to introduce you to some of the most important issues and debates surrounding democratic consolidation and erosion around the world. Readings and activities have been selected to deepen your knowledge of specific cases while also building more general critical thinking and analytical skills that you will use to form your own understanding of democratic consolidation and erosion, and to present your views in both verbal and written formats.

READINGS & COURSE MATERIAL

All readings, lectures, and course materials will be accessible through eLearning Commons (eLC). There are no books or other materials that need to be purchased for this course.

REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Description	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Blog Post 1	800-1200 words	10	October 14
Participation in WhatsApp group chat 1	Cross-university group chat	5	October 16-20
Election Day Report	Assessment of American democracy	15	November 6
Participation in WhatsApp group chat 2	Cross-university group chat	5	November 6-10
Peer Response to Election Day Report	Respond to a classmate's Election Day Report	10	November 13
Participation in WhatsApp group chat 3	Cross-university group chat	5	November 19-24
Blog Post 2	800-1200 words	10	December 2
Response to blog posts	5 responses total, ~300 words each	10	December 5
Country Case Study	12-15 pages	30	December 9

ATTENDANCE

There will be many opportunities to participate virtually and in person throughout the semester, yet given the pandemic, **attendance (in person or via zoom) is not required**. Because of physical distancing requirements, it is not possible for all of us to meet every class. During the first week of the semester, the class will be divided into three groups – Groups A, B, and C – and **students are welcome, but not required, to attend** their assigned days in person in the course schedule, below. Everyone is invited to participate via zoom on the days they are not eligible to attend in person.

As all readings and lectures will be posted on eLC, we will use our class time largely for discussion, which will be recorded via zoom and uploaded to eLC afterwards. If you choose to attend class in person on days you are eligible, **you must sign up online at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled class time**. A link to sign up forms will be available on eLC. If you choose to attend class in person, note that UGA requires all students, faculty, and staff to wear face coverings over the nose and mouth while indoors and maintain at least six feet of distance

whenever possible. If you come to class without a face covering, you will be asked to find one or to leave and participate virtually.

Special Considerations for Covid-19: I would like nothing more than to be in the classroom with all of you this semester; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has made this unsafe for us and for the larger Athens community.

1. If you experience symptoms consistent with Covid-19, or are exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS**. Report your exposure and any symptoms immediately through Dawgcheck and seek a test as soon as possible.

If you are sick and unable to complete your work on time, **DO NOT PANIC**. Do reach out to me as soon as possible, so we can find a solution and ensure you get credit for your work as you are able to complete it. I will not impose late penalties.

2. All course materials, including links to lectures and slides, will be made available through hyperlinks on the syllabus or on eLC. The syllabus will be updated regularly. **You will not be punished in any way for exclusively participating in this class online.**
3. After Thanksgiving (November 26th), all classes will be held exclusively online.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are the time that professors and teaching assistants specifically designate to meet with students for help with assignments, questions about the lecture or reading, answer questions, or just to chat. In other words, office hours are **your** time. You are encouraged to come to office hours with questions about the class, comparative politics, political science, or just to introduce yourself. Professor Clare Brock provides a more thorough description of office hours if you would like more information: <http://www.clarebrock.com/blog/office-hours>

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

First, you will **write two blog posts** for the [Democratic Erosion blog](#). Each post will analyze some recent or current event in the US or elsewhere through the lens of materials we have read in class. Posts should be short—between 800 and 1,200 words—but should be analytical rather than merely descriptive, and should advance and defend a clear, falsifiable argument. The blog will be accessible to the public, and you should write for a broad and potentially non-academic audience: short, punchy sentences are preferable to long, meandering ones, and short paragraphs are preferable to long ones. You should include hyperlinks to relevant resources in your posts. You are strongly encouraged to complete a first draft of your first blog post by **11:59pm on September 30** for instructor feedback. You will publish your first blog post no later than **11:59pm on October 14**, and your second no later than **11:59pm on December 2**.

Second, over the course of the semester you will **comment on at least five blog posts written by other students**, either from UGA or (preferably) from one of the other participating universities. You may also comment on others' comments. Comments should be short—no

longer than 300 words—but, again, should be analytical rather than merely descriptive. I will not grade these comments individually, but will assign you a grade at the end of the semester that reflects their overall quality. Only students enrolled in the course will be able to post or comment on the blog.

Third, you will **participate in three WhatsApp group chats** with students from other universities in the consortium (topics and specific universities to be determined). The chats are scheduled for October 16-20, November 6-10, and November 19-24. Faculty from the participating universities will post questions to guide your discussions. You will send transcripts of the discussions, exported from WhatsApp, after they are complete.

Fourth, you will write an assessment of American democracy and the integrity of elections, and respond to a classmate’s assessment. The report is due November 16 and the peer response on November 13.

Finally, you will write a **12- to 15-page country case study** on a specific country, due by **11:59pm on December 9**. Over the summer of 2021, your case studies will be converted to data and added to the [Democratic Erosion Event Dataset](#) (DEED). Members of the Democratic Erosion consortium use DEED to produce analyses for our partners in the policy community, including the [National Democratic Institute](#) (NDI), the US State Department’s [Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor](#) (DRL), and the [US Agency for International Development](#) (USAID). The format of the case studies has been standardized across universities to facilitate coding and cross-country comparisons. You will be listed as contributors on all analyses that we produce for our policy partners. In past semesters we have invited the best students in the consortium to engage with one another and our policy partners through a summer internship program. We hope to continue this program in summer 2021.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I will provide more detailed rubrics for each assignment, but generally, grades are assigned on the following basis:

A: 93-100 A-: 90-92 B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82 C+: 77-79
C: 73-76 C-: 70-72 D+: 67-69 D: 60-66 F: <60

USE OF LAPTOPS AND TABLETS IN CLASS

While some students find that personal laptops and tablets enhance their classroom experience, others find them to be a significant distraction. In an effort to accommodate all students, the classroom will be divided into “laptop” and “non-laptop” sections. You are welcome to sit in whichever section you feel best suits your learning needs for the day.

CLASS RECORDINGS

There may be instances where the lecture portion of this course is recorded under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA ACT. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Director of the Disability Resource Center at eeew@uga.edu.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

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: <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>. 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.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Thursday, August 20: Introduction

- We will all meet over zoom for our first meeting to discuss the syllabus and the plan for the semester.

Week 1: Setting the Stage

Tuesday, August 25: (Group A)

- Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "[On Democratic Backsliding.](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): pp. 5-19.

Thursday, August 27: (Group B)

- Cheeseman, Nic. [“How Zambia’s long-stable democracy ended up in a political crisis in 2017.”](#) *Quartz*. July 7, 2017.
- Shifter, Michael. [“Nicaragua Is Turning into a Real-Life House of Cards.”](#) *Foreign Policy*. September 5, 2016.
- McCarthy, Michael. [“6 things you need to know about Venezuela’s political and economic crisis.”](#) *The Washington Post*. May 18, 2016.
- Marcinkiewicz, Kamil and Mary Stegmaier. [“Poland appears to be dismantling its own hard-won democracy.”](#) *The Washington Post*. July 21, 2017.

Week 2: Definitions and theories of democracy and democratic consolidation

Tuesday, September 1: (Group C)

- Schumpeter, Joseph. 1947. [Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy](#). New York: Harper & Brothers. Chapter 22.
- Dahl, Robert. 1972. [Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition](#). New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

Thursday, September 3: (Group A)

- Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2006. [Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy](#). New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. [“Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy.”](#) *American Political Science Review* 53(1): pp. 69-105.

Week 3: Definitions and theories of democratic erosion

Tuesday, September 8: (Group B)

- Lust, Ellen and David Waldner. 2015. [Unwelcome Change: Understanding, Evaluating, and Extending Theories of Democratic Backsliding](#). Washington, DC: USAID. pp. 1-15.
- Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. [How Democracies Die](#). New York: Crown. Chapter 1.

Thursday, September 10: (No in-person or zoom meeting; Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association)

- Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2008. [“Bolivia’s Constitutional Breakdown.”](#) *Journal of Democracy* 19(4): pp. 110-124.
- Anria, Santiago. 2016. [“Delegative Democracy Revisited: More Inclusion, Less Liberalism in Bolivia.”](#) *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): pp. 99-108.

Week 4: Using democratic institutions to undermine democracy

Tuesday, September 15: (Group C)

- Varol, Ozan. 2015. [“Stealth Authoritarianism.”](#) *Iowa Law Review* 100(4): pp. 1673-1742. Parts I, II and III.

Thursday, September 17: (Group A)

- Huq, Aziz and Tom Ginsburg. 2017. [“How to Lose a Constitutional Democracy.”](#) *UCLA Law Review* 65(78): pp. 80-169. Parts 1 and 4; skim part 3.

Week 5: Populism and demagoguery

Tuesday, September 22: (Group B)

- Müller, Jan-Werner. 2016. [What Is Populism?](#) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Selections TBD

Thursday, September 24: (Group C)

- Berman, Sheri. 2017. [“The Pipe Dream of Undemocratic Liberalism.”](#) *Journal of Democracy* 28(3): 29-38.
- Kendall-Taylor, Andrea and Erica Frantz. [“How Democracies Fall Apart: Why Populism is a Pathway to Autocracy.”](#) *Foreign Affairs*. December 5, 2016.
- Pita, Adrianna. 2016. [“The Rise of the Right: Right-wing Populism in the US and Europe.”](#) *The Brookings Institution*. April 19, 2016.

Week 6: Information, communication, and accountability

Tuesday, September 29: (Group A)

- Weitz-Shapiro, Rebecca and Matthew Winters. 2016. [“Can Citizens Discern? Information Credibility, Political Sophistication, and the Punishment of Corruption in Brazil.”](#) *Journal of Politics* 79(1): pp. 60-74.
- Ferraz, Claudio and Fred Finan. 2011. [“Exposing Corrupt Politicians.”](#) *J-Pal Policy Brief*.

Thursday, October 1: (Group B)

- Svulik, Milan W. 2019. [“Polarization Versus Democracy.”](#) *Journal of Democracy* 30(3): pp. 20-32.
- Mercieca, Jennifer R. 2019. [“Dangerous Demagogues and Weaponized Communication.”](#) *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 49(3): pp. 264-279.
- Siegal, Alexandra A. and Joshua A. Tucker. 2018. [“The Islamic State’s Information Warfare: Measuring the Success of ISIS’s Online Strategy.”](#) *Journal of Language and Politics* 17(2): pp. 258-280.

Week 7: Disinformation and fake news

Tuesday, October 6: (Group C)

- Bandeira, Luiza, Donara Barojan, Roberta Braga, Jose Luis Peñarredonda and Maria Fernanda Pérez Argüello. 2019. [Disinformation in Democracies: Strengthening Digital Resilience in Latin America](#). Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council. pp. 6-19.
- Pomerantsev, Peter. 2019. [“The Disinformation Age: A Revolution in Propaganda.”](#) *The Guardian*. July 27, 2019.

Thursday, October 8: (Group A)

- Persily, Nate and Alex Stamos. 2019. [“Regulating Online Political Advertising by Foreign Nationals and Governments.”](#) Chapter 3 in *Securing American Elections*. Michael McFaul, ed. Stanford: Stanford Cyber Policy Center.
- DiResta, Renée. 2018. [“What We Now Know About Russian Disinformation.”](#) *New York Times*. December 17, 2018.
- Bellingcat Podcast. 2019. [“MH17, Episode 2: A Pack of Lies.”](#) *Bellingcat Podcast*. July 24, 2019.

Week 8: Clientelism, corruption, and money in politics

Tuesday, October 13: (Group B)

- Mares, Isabela and Lauren Young. 2016. [“Buying, expropriating, and stealing votes.”](#) *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: pp. 267-288.
- Stokes, Susan, Thad Dunning, Valeria Brusco and Marcelo Nazareno. 2013. [*Voters, Brokers and Clientelism*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6.
- Carlin, Ryan E. and Mason Moseley. 2015. [“Good Democrats, Bad Targets: Democratic Values and Clientelistic Vote Buying.”](#) *Journal of Politics* 77(1): pp. 14-26.

Thursday, October 15: (Group C)

- Pavão, Nara. 2018. [“Corruption as the Only Option: The Limits to Electoral Accountability.”](#) *Journal of Politics* 80(3): pp. 996-1010.
- Vaishnav, Milan. 2017. [*When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics*](#). New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.
- Makaya, Lindsey and Amy Smith. [“Could corruption investigations undermine democracy in Latin America?”](#) *Vox*. May 17, 2018.

Week 9: Polarization

Tuesday, October 20: (Group A)

- McCoy, Jennifer, Tahmina Rahman and Murat Somer. 2018. [“Polarization and the Global Crisis of Democracy: Common Patterns, Dynamics and Pernicious Consequences for Democratic Polities.”](#) *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(1): pp. 16-42.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Masha Krupenkin. 2018. [“The Strengthening of Partisan Affect.”](#) *Political Psychology* 39(S1): pp. 201-218.

Thursday, October 22: (Group B)

- Mason, Lilliana. 2018. [*Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*](#). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 3.
- LeBas, Adrienne. 2018. [“Can Polarization Be Positive? Conflict and Institutional Development in Africa.”](#) *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(1): pp. 59-74.
- Ortellado, Pablo and Márcio Moretto Ribeiro. [“Mapping Brazil’s political polarization online.”](#) *The Conversation*. August 3, 2018.

Week 10: Scapegoating, paranoia, and exclusion

Tuesday, October 27: (Group C)

- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. [*Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*](#). New York: The New Press. Chapters 1, 9 and 15.
- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. [*The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*](#). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1.
- Parker, Christopher S. and Matt A. Barreto. Forthcoming. “The Great White Hope: Existential Threat and Status Anxiety in the Age of Trump.” *Political Behavior*.

Thursday, October 29: (Group A)

- Dinas, Elias, et al. 2019. [“Waking Up the Golden Dawn: Does Exposure to the Refugee Crisis Increase Support for Extreme-Right Parties?”](#) *Political Analysis* 27: pp. 244-254.
- Bansak, Kirk, Jens Hainmueller and Dominik Hangartner. 2016. [“How Economic, Humanitarian, and Religious Concerns Shape European Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers.”](#) *Science* 354(6309): pp. 217-222.

Week 11: U.S. Elections

Tuesday, November 3: No class – go vote!

Thursday, November 5: Election Day activity reports (Full class online; reports due Nov. 6)

Week 12: Civil society and social movements

Tuesday, November 10: (Group B)

- Gamboa, Laura. 2017. [“Opposition at the Margins: Strategies Against the Erosion of Democracy in Colombia and Venezuela.”](#) *Comparative Politics* 49(4): pp. 457–477.
- Chenoweth, Erica and Maria J. Stephan. 2012. [Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict](#). Reprint. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapter 1.

Thursday, November 12: (Group C)

- Yarwood, Janette. 2016. [“The struggle over terms limits in Africa: The power of protest.”](#) *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): pp. 51-60.
- Berman, Sheri. 1997. [“Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic.”](#) *World Politics* 49(3): pp. 401–429.

Week 13: Globalization, “globalism,” and democracy promotion abroad

Tuesday, November 17: (Group A)

- Burgoon, Brian. 2009. [“Globalization and backlash: Polanyi’s revenge?”](#) *Review of International Political Economy* 16(2): pp. 145-177.
- Rodrik, Dani. 2018. [“Populism and the Economics of Globalization.”](#) *Journal of International Business Policy* 1(1-2): pp. 12–33.

Thursday, November 19: (Group B)

- Kaufman, Joshua, Carol Sahley and Barbara Smith. 2013. [*USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance*](#). Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development.
- Smilde, David and Abraham F. Lowenthal. [*“Negotiating Venezuela’s Transition.”*](#) *The New York Times*. June 11, 2019.

Week 14: Tying it all together

Tuesday, November 24: TBD (Group C)

Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, December 1: Online writing workshop for country case studies

Thursday, December 3: Wrap up

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.