Democratic Erosion

Fall 2021

INTL 4316

Department of International Affairs
University of Georgia

Instructor Morgan Barney  Class Meeting: T/Th, 2:20-3:35pm, MLC 153

Email: morgan.barney@uga.edu  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 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. You will also be asked to participate in leading class discussions as a means not only to expand your personal understanding of the topic but to give you the chance to refine your presentation skills.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blog Post 1</td>
<td>800-1200 words</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Elections Report</td>
<td>Assessment of American democracy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>November 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Post 2</td>
<td>800-1200 words</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>November 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion Leader</td>
<td>Co-lead class</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to blog posts</td>
<td>5 responses total, ~300 words each</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>December 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Case Study and</td>
<td>12-15 pages</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>December 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Engagement in class discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
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ATTENDANCE

There will be many opportunities to participate throughout the semester. Participation is required but each student is allowed three absences. After the third absence, your participation grade will be reduced by one letter grade.

The attendance policy however is subject to change as we receive additional instruction from UGA as the semester progresses.

As all readings will be posted on eLC, we will use our class time for discussion and review.

Special Considerations for Covid-19:

Face coverings: Following guidance from the University System of Georgia, face coverings are recommended for all individuals while inside campus facilities.

How can I obtain the COVID-19 vaccine? University Health Center is scheduling appointments for students through the UHC Patient Portal (https://patientportal.uhs.uga.edu/login_dualauthentication.aspx). Learn more here – https://www.uhs.uga.edu/healthtopics/covid-vaccine. The Georgia Department of Health, pharmacy chains and local providers also offer the COVID19 vaccine at no cost to you.

To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, please go to: https://georgia.gov/covid-vaccine. In addition, the University System of Georgia has made COVID-19 vaccines available at 15 campuses statewide and you can locate one here: https://www.usg.edu/vaccination What do I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms? Students showing COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see, https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies.
What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19? If you test positive for COVID-19 at any time, you are required to report it through the DawgCheck Test Reporting Survey. We encourage you to stay at home if you become ill or until you have excluded COVID-19 as the cause of your symptoms. UGA adheres to current Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) quarantine and isolation guidance and requires that it be followed. Follow the instructions provided to you when you report your positive test result in DawgCheck. Guidelines for COVID-19 Quarantine Period (As of 8/1/21; follow DawgCheck or see DPH website for most up-to-date recommendations)

Students who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine upon exposure unless they have symptoms of COVID-19 themselves. All others should follow the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) recommendations: Students who are not fully vaccinated and have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 10 days. Those quarantining for 10 days must have been symptom-free throughout the monitoring period and continue self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms for a total of 14 days.

You should report the need to quarantine on DawgCheck (https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/) and communicate directly with your faculty to coordinate your coursework while in quarantine. If you need additional help, reach out to Student Care and Outreach (sco@uga.edu) for assistance.

Monitoring conditions: Note that the guidance referenced in this syllabus is subject to change based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, or the Governor’s Office or. For the latest on UGA policy, you can visit coronavirus.uga.edu.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

The following is taken verbatim from https://curriculumsystems.uga.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus:
“The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.”

DISABILITY SERVICES

The following is taken verbatim from https://drc.uga.edu/content_page/sample-access-statements:

“If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting http://drc.uga.edu.”

The following is taken verbatim from https://online.uga.edu/documents/ugasyllabusguidelines.pdf:
“Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.”

**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](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 November 30.

**Second**, over the course of the semester you will comment on at least five blog posts written by other students. 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 co-lead class discussion for one class this semester. As an upper-level elective, this course serves as a preparatory class for potential graduate school attendance in the future. As such each of you will sign up to co-lead a week of our discussion by providing a summary of the readings assigned for that week, a list of 5-10 questions prepared ahead of time for class to discuss, and any other material you find relevant to this week’s discussion. Groups of 2-3 would be ideal for this assignment. I will still introduce the topic for each week and give a brief lecture, but this assignment is designed to allow you the chance to present and analyze as a means of class participation and engagement with the class material. You are not required to provide a powerpoint unless that is more helpful for you!

**Fourth**, you will write an assessment of American democracy and the integrity of elections. The report is due November 16.
Finally, you will write a **12- to 15-page country case study** on a specific country covering either autocratic consolidation or democratic erosion in your selected country, due by **11:59pm on December 9**. Sign-ups for this assignment are in the instructions for assignment on eLC. Signing up early is encouraged.

**ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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</tbody>
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**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 eew@uga.edu.

Students are not allowed to share any class material, including recordings, with anyone outside of the class without the instructor’s written permission

**UNIVERSTY 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 19: Introduction
  • We will all meet to discuss the syllabus and the plan for the semester.

Week 1: Setting the Stage

Tuesday, August 24:

Thursday, August 26:

Week 2: Definitions and theories of democracy and democratic consolidation

Tuesday, August 31:

Thursday, September 2:

**Week 3: Definitions and theories of democratic erosion**

Tuesday, September 7:

Thursday, September 9:

**Week 4: Using democratic institutions to undermine democracy**

Tuesday, September 14:

Thursday, September 16:

**Week 5: Populism and demagoguery**

Tuesday, September 21: Guest Lecture Cas Mudde

Thursday, September 23:

Week 6: Information, communication, and accountability

Tuesday, September 28: Begin Class Discussion leaders

Thursday, September 30: Class Discussion Leaders

Week 7: Disinformation and fake news

Tuesday, October 5: Class Discussion leaders

Thursday, October 7: Class Discussion leaders

Week 8: Clientelism, corruption, and money in politics

Tuesday, October 12: Class Discussion leaders
Thursday, October 14: Class Discussion leaders


Week 9: Polarization

Tuesday, October 19: Class Discussion leaders


Thursday, October 21: Class Discussion leaders


Week 10: Scapegoating, paranoia, and exclusion

Tuesday, October 27:

- Recommended:

Thursday, October 29:

**Week 11: U.S. Elections**

Tuesday, November 2: In-class Documentary Viewing, “Gerrymandering.”

Thursday, November 4: No class, post summaries of documentary on ELC for participation grade

**Week 12: Civil society and social movements**

Tuesday, November 9:

Thursday, November 11:

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

Tuesday, November 16:

Thursday, November 18:

**Week 14: Tying it all together**

Tuesday, November 23 Guest lecture Megan Turnbull

**Thanksgiving Break**

Tuesday, November 30: Country-report writing workshop

Thursday, December 2: Country-report presentations

Tuesday, December 7: Country-report presentations