

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

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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 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

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

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. Students, faculty and staff who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are no longer required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms.

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>

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 power-point 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:

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.

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

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 19: Introduction

- We will all meet to discuss the syllabus and the plan for the semester.

Week 1: Setting the Stage

Tuesday, August 24:

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

Thursday, August 26:

- 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, August 31:

- 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 2:

- 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 7:

- 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 5.

Thursday, September 9:

- 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 14:

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

Thursday, September 16:

- 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 21: Guest Lecture Cas Mudde

- Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. Chapter 1.
- Müller, Jan-Werner. 2016. [*What Is Populism?*](#) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Chapter 1.

Thursday, September 23:

- 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 28: Begin Class Discussion leaders

- 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, September 30: Class Discussion Leaders

- Svolik, 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.

Week 7: Disinformation and fake news

Tuesday, October 5: Class Discussion leaders

- 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 7: Class Discussion leaders

- 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 12: Class Discussion leaders

- 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 14: Class Discussion leaders

- 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 19: Class Discussion leaders

- 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 21: Class Discussion leaders

- 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:

- 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.
- Recommended:
 - Parker, Christopher S. and Matt A. Barreto. Forthcoming. “The Great White Hope: Existential Threat and Status Anxiety in the Age of Trump.” *Political Behavior*.
 - 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.

Thursday, October 29:

- 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 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:

- 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 11:

- 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 16:

- Burgoon, Brian. 2009. [“Globalization and backlash: Polayni’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 18:

- 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 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

