

POLS 6740:
Political Change: Democracy, Autocracy, and Development

Spring 2025

Course Description

This graduate seminar is designed to introduce doctoral students to some of the most prominent debates and cutting-edge methods on the political economy of development, focusing on the interplay between democracy, autocracy, and economic change. It explores key debates on the causes and consequences of economic development, inequality, and political institutions, with attention to how regime types shape and are shaped by political and economic outcomes. Given the vastness of the literature on these topics, this syllabus reflects a curated selection of seminal works alongside recent scholarship that addresses the intricate relationships between these themes.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand major concepts and theoretical perspectives used to explain political and economic change;
- Acquire specific knowledge about different political systems and countries;
- Hone critical analytical skills through careful reading and discussions of competing arguments;
- Understand the debates surrounding political and economic change;
- Evaluate various social scientific methods used to understand regional trends and political dynamics; and
- Develop research skills to develop original research.

Reading Materials

All readings are available via Canvas to provide insights from a variety of sources as well as to save you money.

Course Requirements and Grading

Students must read the materials *before* class and be prepared to contribute to discussions. The grading scale is as follows: 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 = 60-69%, and F = below 60. Late submissions will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade (i.e., B+ to B) for every 24 hours past the deadline. Students will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. In-Class Discussion (40%)

Students are expected to attend class on time and contribute to class discussions. Leaving class early without the professor's permission is not allowed, though exceptions may be

made in cases of serious illness, religious observance, family emergencies, etc., with supporting documentation.

You should complete all readings before class. Be prepared to demonstrate attentiveness and offer your point of view on the issues. A student will be assigned as a discussion leader each week.

2. Research Design Presentation (10%)

At the end of the semester, we will have two days for presentations. Each presentation will last about 10 minutes and should address: (1) domestically, what have been the major political developments in your country this semester? AND (2) internationally, how is the country's relationship with the US, China, and Russia, and how has it evolved? More details will be announced as they approach.

4. Research Design (50%)

You will develop a research design that demonstrates your ability to engage with a significant question in political science and propose a systematic plan for investigating it. I encourage you to choose a theme/topic related to this class, but it is not required. Your research design should focus on developing a strong theoretical framework and must include an empirical strategy. This assignment is an opportunity to make meaningful progress toward producing a publishable paper or a future dissertation project.

Assignment Guidelines:

1. **Research Question and Introduction:** Clearly articulate a research question that is specific, focused, and addresses an important puzzle or issue in political science. Your question should align with themes from this course (e.g., democracy, autocracy, development, inequality, political institutions, etc.) but can explore other topics with approval.
2. **Literature Review:** Identify the body of literature you aim to engage with. Summarize key debates and highlight how your research contributes to or challenges these discussions.
3. **Theoretical Framework and Argument:** Propose a theoretical framework that explains your research question. Develop at least one clear and logical argument or hypothesis derived from your framework.
4. **Methodological Approach:** Outline how you would test your argument or hypotheses. This should include data sources or types of evidence you would use (e.g., case studies, surveys, experiments, archival data), methods of analysis (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods), and a discussion of any limitations or challenges and how you might address them.

There will be two deliverables:

Research Proposal: a 2- to 3-page (double-spaced) proposal that includes your research question, argument(s), and a vision for the final paper.

Final Research Design Paper (Due Date: May 1): Submit a polished research design of approximately 13-15 pages (double-spaced). This should include all the components listed above and provide a clear roadmap for a future empirical study.

Course Policies

Class Preparation: Students must complete all readings *before* class. Lectures may not reiterate all material in the readings.

Grade Disputes: To dispute a grade, students must submit a written explanation within one week of receiving the assignment. Reassessments do not guarantee a higher grade.

Electronics Policy: The use of phones is prohibited. Laptops and tablets are allowed for notetaking but do not let them distract others (and yourself).

Canvas: Students are responsible for checking Canvas for class materials and assignments.

Keeping in Touch: Email is the best way to reach me; allow 48 hours for a response. Please communicate with me. If you are experiencing any difficulties affecting your performance, do let me know.

Course Content Warning: This course engages with a range of sensitive and potentially distressing topics related to politics of the Middle East and North Africa. Though essential for a comprehensive understanding of the region, certain topics may evoke strong emotions. I encourage you to approach these topics with an open mind.

Higher education aims to challenge students and expose them to new and sometimes uncomfortable ideas. Discomfort can be an integral part of this learning process, but your mental and emotional health is also important. If you have concerns or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or utilize the university's support services (see "Supports for Students" below).

Although you are responsible for completing all class requirements and assignments, accommodations are available to support your well-being and academic success.

Respect for Diversity: **It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, and their learning needs be addressed both in and out of class.** In our structured and unstructured discussions and dialogues, we will have many opportunities to explore some challenging issues and increase our understandings of diverse perspectives. The success of this class relies on the participation, support, and mutual understanding, even when we encounter disagreements.

I encourage you to speak up and share your views, with the understanding that this is a learning environment where respectful engagement and regard for dignity are essential. Our conversations may sometimes be difficult, and we may make mistakes in how we speak and listen. We will need patience, courage, imagination, and other qualities to effectively engage with our texts and films as well as our own ideas and experiences. Above all, respect for others is crucial.

University Policies

The Americans with Disabilities Act:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the [Instruction & Evaluation regulations](#).

In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

If you will need accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact:

Center for Disability & Access
801-581-5020
disability.utah.edu
65 Student Services Building
201 S 1460 E
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Safety at the U:

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety
801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)
dps.utah.edu
1735 E. S. Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
801-581-8365
oeo.utah.edu
135 Park Building
201 Presidents' Cir.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students
801-581-7066
deanofstudents.utah.edu
270 Union Building
200 S. Central Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To file a police report, contact:
Campus Police & Department of Public Safety
801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)
dps.utah.edu
1735 E. S. Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence.

To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Campus Wellness
801-581-7776
wellness.utah.edu
350 Student Services Building
201 S. 1460 E.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Academic Misconduct:

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: [Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct](#).

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

"...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Supports for Students: Your success at the University of Utah is important to all of us here! If you feel like you need extra support in academics, overcoming personal difficulties, or finding community, the U is here for you. Please refer to the [Student Support Services page for the U](#) for updated information.

Basic Needs Student Support Statement: **To learn effectively, students' wellness and safety must first be supported. Together, we can work to meet these basic needs.** Success at The University of Utah includes learning about and using available resources. The [Basic Needs Collective](#) (BNC) is a coordinated resource referral hub. They educate about and connect students to campus and community resources to help them meet their basic needs. As a central location for resource referrals related to food, housing, health insurance, managing finances, legal services, mental health, etc., any student experiencing

difficulty with basic needs is encouraged to contact them. Drop into their office located in the Union basement or schedule with them online for an in-person or virtual visit through their webpage: <https://basicneeds.utah.edu/>. If you're having trouble with any aspects of wellness, please contact the [Center for Campus Wellness](mailto:wellness@sa.utah.edu) (wellness@sa.utah.edu or 801-581-7776). Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, thoughts of harm or suicide, or increased anxiety may schedule an appointment at the [University Counseling Center](mailto:counselingcenter@sa.utah.edu) (counselingcenter@sa.utah.edu or 801-581-6826).

Other Student Resources

- Learning Center: <https://learningcenter.utah.edu/>
- Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.utah.edu/writing-resources/index.php>
- Student Code: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>
- Accommodation Policy (see Section Q): <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

Preliminary Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 9)

Introduction and Key Concepts

1. Freedom in the World 2024
 - a. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/FIW_2024_DigitalBooklet.pdf
2. Human Development Report 2023/2024 Snapshot
 - a. <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2023-24snapshoten.pdf>

Week 2 (Jan 16)

Modernization Theory and Some Critics

1. Lipset, Seymour Martin (1959) "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53 (1), 69-105.
2. Huntington, Samuel (1965), "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics* 17 (3), 386-430.
3. Przeworski and Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics*.
4. Crafts, Nicholas and Kevin O'Rourke (2014), "Twentieth Century Growth," in *Handbook of Economic Growth*, Vol 2A.

Week 3 (Jan 23)

History Explains?

1. Nathan Nunn (2008). "The long-term effects of Africa's slave trades," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(1): 139-176.
2. Woodberry, Robert (2012), "The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *APSR* 106:2.
3. Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. (2005). "Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth." *Handbook of Economic Growth* 1: 385-472.
4. Banerjee, Abhijit, and Lakshmi Iyer (2006), "History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India," *American Economic Review*, 95:4.
5. Levitsky, Steven, and María Victoria Murillo (2009), "Variation in Institutional Strength." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 115-133.

Week 4 (Jan 30)

Democracy's Past and Future

1. Geddes, Barbara (2007), "What Causes Democratization?" in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*
2. Przeworski, Adam (2009), "Conquered or Granted: A History of Franchise Extensions." *British Journal of Political Science* 39: 291-321.
3. Przeworski, Adam (2009) "Self-Government in Our Times." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 71-92.
4. Boix, Carles (2011), "Democracy, Development, and the International System," *American Political Science Review* 105:4.

Week 5 (Feb 6)

Beyond Modernization

1. Ross, Michael L. (2014), "What do we know about the resource curse?" manuscript
2. Miller, "Economic Development, Violent Leader Removal, and Democratization. " 2012. *American Journal of Political Science*.
3. Svobik, "Authoritarian Reversals and Democratic Consolidation. " 2008. *APSR*.
4. Paler, Laura (2013), "Keeping the Public Purse: An Experiment in Windfalls, Taxes, and the Incentives to Restrain." *American Political Science Review* 107(4):706–725.

Week 6 (Feb 13)

Institutions

1. Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91 (2001): 1369-1401

2. Haggard, Stephen. 2004. Institutions and Growth in East Asia. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Winter 2004, Vol. 38, No. 4, pp. 53-81

Week 7 (Feb 20)

Democracy and Poverty

Reading TBD

Week 8 (Feb 27)

Regime Type and Development I

1. Robert Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Ch. 1. (CANVAS)
2. Przeworski, Adam et al., *Democracy and Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Focus on Introduction, Ch. 1 (CANVAS)
3. Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002), pp. 21-35.
4. Slater, Dan. 2013. "Democratic Careening." *World Politics*, 65(4): 729-763.

Week 9 (March 6)

Regime Type and Development II

1. Olson, Mancur. "Dictatorship, Democracy and Development," *APSR* 87 (3): 567-576.
2. Gerring, John et al. 2005. "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Historical Perspective." *World Politics*, 57, 323-354.
3. Gerring, John, Strom C. Thacker and Rodrigo Alfaro. 2012. "Democracy and Human Development," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 74, No. 1 pp. 1-17
4. Ross, Michael (2006) "Is Democracy Good for the Poor?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 50:4.

Spring Break (March 13)

Week 10 (March 20)

Gender, Democracy, and Autocracy

1. Noh, Y., Grewal, S. and Kilavuz, M.T., 2024. Regime support and gender quotas in autocracies. *American political science review*, 118(2), pp.706-723.
2. Noh, Y., 2024. Public opinion and women's rights in autocracies. *Politics & Gender*, 20(1), pp.241-245.
3. Bush, Sarah Sunn, and Pär Zetterberg. "Gender quotas and international reputation." *American Journal of Political Science* 65.2 (2021): 326-341.
4. Krook, Mona Lena, and Diana Z. O'Brien. "All the president's men? The appointment of female cabinet ministers worldwide." *The Journal of Politics* 74.3 (2012): 840-855.

Week 11 (March 27)

Democratic Breakdowns

1. Noh, Yuree. 2024. "The Role of Women's Rights in Authoritarian Entrenchment and Democratic Backsliding." APSA MENA Newsletter
2. Waldner, David, and Ellen Lust. "Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2018): 93-113.
3. Little, Andrew T., and Anne Meng. "Measuring democratic backsliding." *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2023): 1-13.
4. Druckman, James N. "How to study democratic backsliding." *Political Psychology* 45 (2024): 3-42.

Week 12 (April 3)

TBD

Week 13 (April 10)

Research Presentation

Week 14 (April 17)

Research Presentation

April 24

Research Design Due