COURSE DESCRIPTION: Today, for the first time in history, a majority of the world’s nation-states qualify, in some sense, as democracies. While all of these regimes are characterized by relatively free and open elections, the nature and extent of democracy vary substantially across these nations, as do their basic structures, their effectiveness, and their political stability. This research seminar uses comparative methods to explore the nature and extent of democracy and to assess competing theories advanced to explain the character, effectiveness, legitimacy and survival of democratic regimes. Specifically, the seminar will attempt to define democracy and to explore competing theories that explain what democracies are and under what conditions they operate most effectively. During the first part of the semester we will read and discuss a broad selection of literature -- some old, some recent -- on the nature and operation of democracies paying attention not only the questions asked in this literature and the answers provided but also to the research methods and data employed in this research. During the second part of the semester, students will present and critique their own research on the structure and operation of democracy. The seminar also includes practical instruction on concept formation and measurement and on comparative research methods.

REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic Essay</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Wed. week of assigned class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>April 18 (draft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>May 15 (final)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

READINGS Required Readings are listed for each week, below, and should be completed before the class in which they are discussed. Most of the required articles are available on-line via electronic journals. The books listed are used extensively and are available from on-line booksellers. All of these are classic readings and would be valuable additions to your professional libraries.

Outline: This syllabus is divided into ten topics with one topic to be covered in each meeting. All dates are tentative and subject to change.

Essential Readings should be read by everyone before the meeting in which they will be discussed. Items For Further Readings are NOT required (although we hope that discussion leaders for the week will sample this additional literature and incorporate it into the discussion).

January 17: Organizational Meeting: No Readings


On what basis is democracy preferred to other forms of government? Traditionally there have been three approaches to the justification of democracy that have dominated: an intrinsic approach which emphasizes Natural Rights and Law (‘Self-Evident Truths’), an extrinsic or instrumentalist approach which justifies democracy empirically based on its demonstrated benefits for human welfare, and a logical approach, which argues, a la Churchill, that democracy is simply the ‘least bad’ form of tyranny.

Essential Reading:
  c. John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Democracy, Chapter VII: “Of True and False Democracy; Representation of All, and Representation of the Majority only.”

For Further Reading:
  c. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson: Economic Origins of Dictatorships and Democracies.
  d. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson: Why Nations Fail
January 31: Defining and Measuring Democracy


Essential Reading:

b. Anthony McGann, The Logic of Democracy, Chapters 1-5.
e. David Collier and Steven Levitsky, Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovations in Comparative research” *World Politics.* 49:3 (April, 1997).

For Further Reading

February 7: Cultural Theories of Democracy, Modernization Theory and Growth

A prominent theory holds that the creation, survival and effective performance of Democracy depends on the existence of certain cultural “requisites” among them, an active, informed, rational and tolerant citizenry, a strong middle class, and a pluralist civil society. Empirical research provides mixed support. A variant of cultural theory, modernization theory holds that economic development is the key to democratization. Economic growth sets in motion profound social and political changes that together transform the political culture and result almost inexorably in democracy. Empirical research confirms a strong correlation between democracy and economic development but the causal direction of the relationship remains contested.

Essential Readings:

a. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture, Chapters 1, 5, 7 and 8.


f. Adam, Prezeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Cheibub and Fernando Limongi, Democracy and Development, pp. 78-186 (ignore the overlap with preceding article.


For Further Reading:


d. Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics.

e. Adam, Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Cheibub and Fernando Limongi, Democracy and Development.


February 14: Institutional Theories of Democracy

Institutional theories of democracy downplay the role of culture and emphasize instead the importance of both formal and informal institutions. ‘Getting the institutions right’ is considered critical to the establishment and effective functioning of democracy. Democracies that function well survive; those that don’t – don’t. Institutions, however, are ‘endogenous;’ they are creations of social, political and economic forces as much as they are shapers of these forces.

Essential Readings:


For Further Reading


b. Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*


The potential for democratization may be influenced by cultural requisites and institutional design, but it also is conditioned by that nature of a country’s natural resources, its geographic ‘neighborhood,’ and the efforts of international organizations and donors.

**Essential Reading:**


**For Further Reading:**


February 28: Constitutional Design and its Consequences

The choice of political institutions not only can affect the quality of democracy, it also can have profound effects on a government’s legitimacy, stability and ultimately its survival. Contrary to the conventional wisdom American styles institutions which emphasize separation of power and federalism are, on average, less legitimate, less stable and shorter lived. American style single member district electoral systems also perform poorly compared to systems with multimember districts and proportional representation. PR systems, on average, produce greater public goods, greater gender equality, greater representation of ethnic, religious and racial minorities, and less pork-barrel and clientelistic politics.

Essential Readings:


For Further Reading:

a. Arend Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy
March 7: Corruption

Required:


For Further Reading:


March 28:  Human Rights and Democracy

What rights do individuals and groups have in a Democracy? From whence do they derive? How they are best achieved and maintained. Philosophical work on human rights has a long history, the empirical study of human rights, by contrast, is in its infancy.

Essential Readings:


For Further Reading:


April 11: Representation and Diversity, Women in Democracy

Women are a mathematical majority in most countries yet exercise far less political power, participate less in most activities, and hold fewer and less powerful political offices. The explanations offered include cultural and institutional biases, biology, and economic and social structures among others.

Required Readings:


For Further Reading:

April 18  The Benefits of Democracy: Economic Growth and Conflict Reduction

Democracy is assumed have a variety of positive benefits for human development including the promotion of economic growth, the reduction of economic inequality, the reduction of domestic conflict and the promotion of international peace. The evidence is mixed in all cases, although it is probably strongest with respect to the democratic peace.

**Essential Readings:**


**For Further Reading:**


April 25 and May 2: Class Presentations.