Democracy: Theory and Practice
LSHV 529-40   Summer 2021

Instructor: John Shook, PhD
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Semester start, end: May 24 – Aug 15, 2021
Class Meetings: Tuesday 6:00 PM–8:30 PM, location TBD (but likely hybrid/online)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4pm – 6pm, or by appointment

Course Description

Political philosophers have argued that people always strive for liberty under just governments. Political historians have figured that democracy's global spread was inevitable. Now pundits talk about democracy's retreat, "illiberal" democracy, and a "post truth" world. Defining the genuine nature of democracy, setting valid criteria for democratic constitutions and governance, and ranking countries from most to least democratic, is now more important than ever. We will explore theories of human rights, civil liberties, social justice, and citizen participation to observe their work in practice across a variety of established and newer democracies. What will be democracy's future? The strategies of anti-democratic agendas, domestic and foreign, also compel the question of whether a democracy like the United States can resist misinformation and propaganda more effectively than undemocratic nations.

Democracy expects citizen participation, and plenty of social communication. Unfree speech always accompanies so much free speech. Manufactured skepticism directed towards academic knowledge and professional expertise allows spin, disinformation, and propaganda to disseminate widely, thereby promoting a cacophony of uncivil agendas. In 2016, "post-truth" was picked as the Word of the Year by the *Oxford Dictionaries*. A tide of cynicism and distrust around the world is surging in attitudes about political leadership, civic institutions, news reporting, and scientific theory. The degeneration of anti-social media, the politicization of fake news, and the conspiratorial tales of anti-science are spreading faster than truth thanks to popular media technologies, allowing anyone to live in their own bubble of comforting certainties and hateful prejudices. Democracies might not be more resistant to post-truth politics than dictatorships or totalitarianisms. Rather than surrendering to our future life in a post-truth world, we can rebuild confidence in professional expertise and demonstrable knowledge, just in time to rescue democracy once again.

Course Learning Objectives

Many academic disciplines in the humanities and social sciences are consulted throughout this course, notably history, political theory, philosophy, cultural studies, demographics, civil and constitutional law, comparative government, and international relations. Relationships among disciplines will require adjudication: their assessments may be in agreement or discordant, or their recommendations might point in divergent directions. While exploring these disciplinary approaches, students will achieve individualized learning objectives, taking advantage of opportunities to:

- acquire facility with historical and current demographic and political data that point to trends about rising and declining democratization in many countries around the world;

- assess perspectives and insights about the populations of various countries, to appreciate the wide variety of public attitudes and cultural expectations towards democracy, as people understand its meaning for their lives;

- apply theories from multiple disciplines explaining the unsteady pace of global democratization, by postulating correlations among democratic institutions and other historical, social, religious, economic, and military factors;

- examine liberal and illiberal democracies around the world, to compare their distinctive priorities about human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, economic opportunities, social injustices, and individual freedoms;

- explore ongoing debates about populist and authoritarian threats to democracy fomented by ideological agendas utilizing new media and internet communication.

This course is writing intensive. Students are posting in discussion conversations every week. Assignments are opportunities for composing a discussion piece, an analytical essay, and a research paper.

Required Texts

All texts are accessible through the classroom in Canvas. Obtaining paper copies may also be advisable.

Stasavage, David. 2020. *The Decline and Rise of Democracy - A Global History from Antiquity to Today*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 9780691177465

> Publisher's abstract: Draws from global evidence to show that democratic practices were present in many places, at many other times, from the Americas before European conquest, to ancient Mesopotamia, to precolonial Africa. Drawing from examples spanning several millennia, Stasavage first considers why states developed either democratic or autocratic styles of governance and argues that early democracy tended to develop in small places with a weak state and, counterintuitively, simple technologies. When central state institutions (such as a tax bureaucracy) were absent—as in medieval Europe—rulers needed consent from their populace to govern. When central institutions were strong—as in China or the Middle East—consent was less necessary and autocracy more likely. He then explores the transition from early to modern democracy, which first took shape in England and then the United States, illustrating that modern democracy arose as an effort to combine popular control with a strong state over a large territory. Democracy has been an experiment that has unfolded over time and across the world—and its transformation is ongoing.

Boix, Carles et al. 2012. "A Complete Data Set of Political Regimes, 1800-2007." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(12): 1523-1554.

Teorell, Jan et al. 2019. "Measuring Polyarchy across the Globe, 1900-2017." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 54(1): 71-95.

Pappas, Takis. 2019. *Populism and Liberal Democracy*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780198837886

> Publisher's abstract: Offers a comprehensive theory about populism during both its emergence and consolidation phases in three geographical regions: Europe, Latin America and the United States. Based on the detailed comparison of all significant cases of populist governments (including Argentina, Greece, Peru, Italy, Venezuela, Ecuador, Hungary, and the U.S.) and two cases of populist failure (Spain and Brazil), each of the book's seven chapters addresses a specific question: What is populism? How to distinguish populists from non-populists? What causes populism? How and where does populism thrive? How do populists govern? Who is the populist voter? How does populism endanger democracy? If rising populism is a threat to liberal democratic politics, as this book clearly shows, it is only by answering the questions it posits that populism may be resisted successfully.

Tomini, Luca. 2018. *When Democracies Collapse - Assessing Transitions to Non-Democratic Regimes in the Contemporary World.* ISBN 9780367888572

> Publisher's abstract: While the process of democratization is nowadays an established scholarship, the reverse process of de-democratization has generated less attention even when the regression or even breakdown of democracy occurred on a regular basis over past decades. This book investigates both the different combination of explanatory factors triggering the transition from democratic rule as well as the role of the actors' involved in the process. It aims to integrate different levels of analysis and explanatory factors through a comparative analysis of the phenomenon since the beginning of the third wave of democratization. As such, it addresses the existing divide between the approaches focused on the conditions and those focused on the processes of change, using a mixed-method research design.

Haggard, Stephen, and Kaufman, Robert. 2021. *Backsliding - Democratic Regress in the Contemporary World*.

Publisher's abstract: Assaults on democracy are increasingly coming from the actions of duly elected governments, rather than coups. Backsliding examines the processes through which elected rulers weaken checks on executive power, curtail political and civil liberties, and undermine the integrity of the electoral system. Drawing on detailed case studies, including the United States and countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Africa, the book focuses on three, inter-related causal mechanisms: the pernicious effects of polarization; realignments of party systems that enable elected autocrats to gain legislative power; and the incremental nature of derogations, which divides oppositions and keeps them off balance. A concluding chapter looks at the international context of backsliding and the role of new technologies in these processes.

Shaffer, Kris. 2019. *Data Versus Democracy - How Big Data Algorithms Shape Opinions and Alter the Course of History*. Apress/Springer. ISBN 9781484245392
Publisher's abstract: *Data versus Democracy* investigates and explores how, in the era of social media, human cognition, algorithmic recommendation systems, and human psychology are all working together to reinforce (and exaggerate) human bias. The dangerous confluence of these factors is driving media narratives, influencing opinions, and possibly changing election results. In this book, algorithmic recommendations, clickbait, familiarity bias, propaganda, and other pivotal concepts are analyzed and then expanded upon via fascinating and timely case studies: the 2016 US presidential election, Ferguson, GamerGate, international political movements, and more events that affect all of us. What are the implications of how we engage with information in the digital age?

Recommended texts, for background and research explorations:

O'Neil, Patrick. 2018. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 6th edn. W. W. Norton.

Ikenberry, G. John. 2020. *A World Safe for Democracy - Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order*. Yale University Press.

Wall, Steven, ed. 2015. *The Cambridge Companion to Liberalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Runciman, David. 2014. *The Confidence Trap - A History of Democracy in Crisis from World War I to the Present*. Princeton University Press.

Cosentino, Gabriele. 2020. *Social Media and the Post-Truth World Order: The Global Dynamics of Disinformation*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Course Requirements

You are expected to do the readings, observe lectures, and engage with the course material in depth. Your responsibilities include completing all the assignments. Participation is essential to your success in this class. Students should spend approximately 12 hours per week on the work for each module.

1. Class Participation. Regular participation in classes, whether held on campus (to be determined) or online via Zoom, and frequent participation in class Discussion via Canvas. During every week, there is a discussion area to serve as s student forum for conversations about the weekly course material. Each student will give a 15 minute presentation about their research paper at the end of the semester. 200 points possible. 20% of total grade.

2. Commentary Piece. 1200 words. A commentary piece, typical for a magazine or blog, offers insight and commentary on an issue of public importance, composed for a broad audience. Students will choose a country from a list from the instructor, and explain its current political status by applying the criteria for "polyarchy". This commentary will either (a) support optimism about growing democracy in this country despite challenges; or the commentary will (b) support pessimism about major obstacles that are eroding democracy in this country. 100 points possible. 10% of total grade.

3. Analytical Essay. 2500 words. This essay will fulfill two goals: (1) first, explain how a chosen nation's present-day problems with advancing democracy is similar to a past nation's historical difficulties attaining democracy; and (2) second, explore how commonalities between these two nations support predictions about making democratic

progress in today's nation. 300 points possible. 30% of total grade.

4. Research Paper. 5000 words. You will first develop a one-page prospectus outlining your plan for the organization and goal of this paper, to be approved by the instructor. The research paper examines some selected component of democracy – such as citizen participation, competitive elections, political parties, government powers, judicial neutrality, or executive authority – in order to assess the impact of unfree speech and propaganda on that democratic institution's resilience. Why is that selected aspect of democracy so essential to democratic life and government, and what makes it vulnerable to "post truth" narratives and undemocratic agendas? A successful paper synthesizes relevant information gained in the course (lectures and readings), information from a selected body of secondary literature, and the student's broader academic experience. 400 possible points. 40% of total grade.

Citation Style: The APA Style (APA Publication Manual 6th Edition) – http://pitt.libguides.com/citationhelp/APA

Final Grade

Assignment	Percent of Total Grade	Possible Points
Participation	20%	200
Commentary Piece	10%	100
Analytical Essay	30%	300
Research Paper	40%	400
	TOTAL	1000 POINTS

Total Points	Grade	Quality Points
920-1000	A	4.00
900-919	A-	3.67
881-899	B+	3.33
800-880	B	3.00
781-799	B-	2.67
761-780	C+	2.33
700-760	C	2.00
690-699	C-	1.67
680-689	D+	1.33
660-679	D	1.00
Less than 660	F	0.00

Course Policies: Remote Course Delivery

This course is subject to the University's ongoing status of Instructional Continuity. Depending on Georgetown's announcements about instruction on and off campus in May, this course (or portions of this course) may be delivered remotely throughout the term. This means that you may be required to attend and actively participate in synchronous sessions at the assigned class time via Zoom. Further, all coursework (assignments, announcements, projects, discussion boards etc.) outside of the synchronous sessions must be submitted through Canvas. Canvas is Georgetown University's learning management system. Access this course and related material in the Canvas learning management system at canvas.georgetown.edu and logging in with your Georgetown netID credentials.

Virtual Office Hours: If you would like to meet with me or should you have questions or concerns about the course, please schedule with my virtual office hours or email me to schedule a one-on-one meeting.

Participation and Engagement - Domestic Students
Participation is a key component of your success as a student engaged in a remote learning environment as it encourages rich discussion and interaction with your classmates and demonstrates your command of course concepts to the instructor. In this course, participation is worth 20% of your grade. Synchronous participation might primarily take place via Zoom. What does good participation look like?
1. Actively contribute to class conversations by answering instructor questions and responding to peers' comments and ideas;
2. Demonstrate your comprehension of course content by sharing stories the real-world application in class discussions;
3. Ask relevant clarifying and contextual questions during synchronous sessions;
4. Appropriately use Zoom tools to meaningfully contribute to class conversations: the hand raise tool, reaction emojis, the chat function, and participating in breakout rooms.

Participation and Engagement - International Students
Participation is a key component of your success as an international student engaged in a remote learning environment as it encourages rich discussion and interaction with your classmates and demonstrates your command of course concepts to the instructor. In this course, participation is worth 20% of your grade. Synchronous participation may primarily take place via Zoom. What does good participation look like?
1. Submit a Zoom video of your reflection after watching the recorded lecture
2. Schedule a time to meet with your teammates to work on projects
3. Attend the rotating synchronous class meeting

Student Expectations in a Remote Learning Environment
1. If you have questions or concerns about the course, schedule time to meet with the instructor 1-1 or attend virtual office hours.
2. Given Zoom will serve as the primary tool for synchronous sessions, please adhere to the following practices:
   a. Attend class on-time and remain on Zoom throughout the session
   b. Arrive to the Zoom class prepared to discuss readings, current events, and other materials assigned by the instructor
   c. Unless you have received prior approval from the instructor, keep webcams and speakers on throughout the entire class session
   d. Keep your microphone muted unless speaking
   e. Dress appropriately for class (business casual or casual is best)
   f. Limiting eating to before or after class (or during breaks)
3. Submit completed assignments by the date specified in the syllabus.
4. Complete all assigned reading and watch all pre-recorded videos by the assigned due date
5. Complete Canvas modules or other online literature by specified dates.
6. Meet with team members or partners virtually to complete assignments equitably (if applicable).

Remote Learning Tips: As a student engaging in this class remotely, you must take a far more active role in learning and accessing information than traditional students in face-to-face classrooms. Click the link to learn about 10 ways to ensure distance learning success.

Announcements: Announcements related to this course will be posted in Canvas regularly. They will appear on your Canvas dashboard when you log in and/or they will be sent to you directly through your preferred method of notification. Please make certain to check them regularly, as they will contain important information about upcoming projects or class concerns.

Email: In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:
● Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module
● Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the "Ask the Instructor Discussion Form" in the Canvas course

Academic Support: Services and resources may include an online orientation; access to library resources; a readiness assessment or survey; testing services; tutoring; non-native language services; writing and/or math centers; tutorials or other forms of guidance on conducting research, writing papers, citing sources, using an online writing lab, and using institution-specific technology; supplemental instruction programs; and teaching assistants.

Writing Center: The Georgetown University Writing Center is a free resource open to all enrolled Georgetown students and offers online appointments.

Technical Support for Students:
- Canvas - Students have 24/7 access to http://canvas.georgetown.edu/getting-help, including live chat and a support hotline at (855) 338-2770
- Zoom - For support with Zoom, email: zoom@georgetown.edu
- Use of Georgetown University-issued accounts for Google Mail, Calendar, Groups, Talk, Docs, Sites, Video, and Contacts is governed by the contract between Georgetown University and Google. For help managing your Google Documents, visit Google Drive Help Center.
- Contact the UIS Service Center at help@georgetown.edu if you have a question regarding your GU netID and/or password; your GU email account; any connectivity issues.

Support Services:

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:
- Academic Resource Center
- 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
- 202-687-6985
- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)
- (202) 687-4798

Students' Religious Observances: The following is university policy: Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

Disabilities: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees disability support services, (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu;) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website. Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity: During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. Check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings. The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Georgetown Honor System: All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge: *In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

Plagiarism: In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail. If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student may receive a grade of F for the course.

Turnitin.com: Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Sexual Misconduct: Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator, will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website.

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include:

1. Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: confidential email sarp@georgetown.edu
2. Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202. 687.6985 or after hours, call 202. 444.7243 and ask for the on-call CAPS clinician.

Thank you for supporting our students impacted by sexual violence. If interested, other helpful more general resources are included below:

- Georgetown Self-Care Resource Guide
- Georgetown Wellness Wheel
- Georgetown Guide to Recognizing Students in Distress

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC
Associate Director of Health Education Services for
Sexual Assault Response and Prevention
(202) 687-0323
jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley
Trauma Specialist
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
(202) 687-6985
els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at:
https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help.

Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations: Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be

handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical need and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out at the [Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations for Students webpage](#).

Class Schedule

This tentative schedule is subject to change as necessary.

Week	Topics	Readings before class; Events and due dates
Week 1. May 25- May 31	Early Democracy: Greece, Near East, North America, Africa.	The Decline and Rise of Democracy: Part 1
Week 2. June 1- June 7	Enlightenments: In Islam, China, Europe, America.	The Decline and Rise of Democracy: Part 2, 3
Week 3. June 8- June 14	Varieties of Democratic Experience: Polyarchy, illiberalism, anocracy.	"A Complete Data Set of Political Regimes, 1800-2007" and "Measuring Polyarchy across the Globe, 1900-2017"
Week 4. June 15- June 21	Populism: Its sufficient conditions and its usual causes.	Populism and Liberal Democracy: chaps 1, 2, 3
Week 5. June 22- June 28	Populism Unleashed: Populism vs. institutions of democracy.	Populism and Liberal Democracy: chaps 4, 5, 6, 7 Commentary Piece due June 28
Week 6. June 29- July 5	Democracies Crumbling: Comparative government, democratic indices.	When Democracies Collapse: chaps 1, 2, 3, 4
Week 7. July 6- July 12	Democracies Collapsing: Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Gambia, Nigeria, Thailand, Myanmar, Mali, Turkey	When Democracies Collapse: chaps 5, 6, 7, 8
Week 8. July 13- July 19	Democracy Adrift: Polarizations of class, ethnicity, religion…	Backsliding: chaps 1, 2 Analytical Essay due July 19
Week 9. July 20- July 26	Democracy Sinking: Constitutions abandoned, autocrats rising.	Backsliding: chaps 3, 4, 5
Week 10. July 27- Aug 2	Post-Truth Hacked My Head: Cognitive biases, group-think, conspiracy thinking, ideological myth…	Data Versus Democracy: chaps 1, 2, 3
Week 11. Aug 3- Aug 9	Democracy vs The Internet: Protecting professional expertise and knowledge with education and censorship?	Data Versus Democracy: chaps 4, 5, 6, 7
Week 12. Aug 10- Aug 15	Student Presentations complete Research Paper	Research Paper due Aug 15. Upload on Canvas and email to instructor