Democratization
PLSC 348/GLBL 213/EP&E 352

Instructor: Milan Svolik, Department of Political Science

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 3:30-5:20, in RKZ 102

Office Hours: Fridays 3-5pm, 330 Rosenkranz Hall, or by appointment

Email: milan.svolik@yale.edu

Course Web Page: canvas.yale.edu

Midterm Book Review Due: October 25 (in class)

Final Topics Announced: November TBD

Final Paper Due: December 20

Description: This course examines the process, causes, and consequences of democratization. We begin by reviewing key explanations for transitions to democracy and democratic breakdowns. We then apply these insights to key moments in the history of democratization: the emergence of modern democracy in the 19th century, the rise of fascism in inter-war Europe, the breakdown of democracy in Latin America, the collapse of communism and the resurgence of authoritarianism in Eastern Europe, and the Arab Spring and its aftermath. Our ultimate goal is to use insights from the scientific study of democratization to evaluate the public policy discourse on democratization.

Course Requirements: Students are required to attend classes, read the assigned material, and discuss assigned research articles. The final grade will be composed as follows: class participation 30%, midterm book review 30%, and final research paper 40%. Class participation includes serving as a discussion leader of an assigned article (and includes preparing a handout/summary) (10%), a paragraph-per-reading summary of the readings assigned for each meeting (10%), and participation in class activities and discussion (10%).

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if
they were your own – including in exams and problem sets. Plagiarism is a serious offense that is punished severely at Yale. The most common penalty is a suspension from the University. Please be sure to review Yale’s Academic Integrity Policy.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is required. Notify me in advance if you will be absent.

**Email summaries:** I will ask you to prepare a paragraph-per-reading summary/discussion of the readings assigned for each meeting and post it under “Reading Summaries” on Canvas by the noon on the day of the class. The purpose of these summaries is to facilitate your preparation for the class and encourage you to participate in class discussions. You can also use these summaries as an opportunity to provide feedback on the assigned readings.

**Participation in class discussion:** I will keep notes of your participation in class discussion. I will not post these, but you can always ask me about how you are doing.

**Class discussion:** A part of your participation will be to serve as discussion leader for a reading of your choice from the syllabus. This entails preparing a one-page handout of the reading with issues/questions for discussion. If you email your handout to me in advance (by noon of the day of your presentation), I will make copies for the class.

**The midterm book review:** A five-page review and discussion of one among the following books (all have been placed on 24-hour reserve at Bass library):


For an example of a critical, analytical book review see e.g. Tony Judt’s “Whose story is it? The Cold War in Retrospect”, which is included in class readings, or the book reviews that regularly appear in journals like The Economist, Perspectives on Politics, The New York Review of Books, and The New Yorker.

The final research paper: The culmination of this course is a final research paper on a research question chosen by the instructor (maximum of 15 pages). Students can
choose from among several formats: an original data collection and analysis, an original analytical argument, a case study, and a critical synthesis of a literature. We will also hold a separate meeting dedicated to developing your ideas on the final paper and answering any questions. I will also distribute a handout with the criteria that I plan to use when grading the final paper.

**In-class behavior:** All cell phones and related devices must be stowed away during class. Laptop computers may only be used for class-related work.

**Readings:** You are required to bring any assigned readings or materials to class. The course readings are available either on reserve at the library (books) or on Canvas (articles and book chapters).

**Course Outline:**

1. **Transitions to Democracy: Modernization Theory and its Discontents (9/6)**


2. **Transitions to Democracy: Further Explanations (9/13)**


3. Case Study: Oil and Democracy (9/20)


4. Democracy and Dictatorship: Concepts and Measures (9/27)


5. Repression, Protest, and Revolutions (10/4)


6. Case study: The Arab Uprisings and their Aftermath (10/11)


*Recommended*: Watch “The Square (2013).”
7. Midterm Book Discussion (10/25)

8. Democratic Breakdowns I: Executive Takeovers (11/1)


Recommended: Watch “La ley de Herodes (1999) or “Triumph des Willens (1935).”

9. Democratic Breakdowns II: Military Intervention (11/8)


10. Case Study: Venezuela (11/15)


11. Case Study: Russia (11/15)


Recommended: Watch: “Putin’s Way (2015).”

12. Electoral Fraud (11/29)


13. Final Paper Meeting (12/6)