A 2013 USAID document asks four key questions:

What triggers increased citizen demand for democratic reforms in a relatively rich authoritarian regime? What elements contribute to the rapid breakdown of a relatively stable democracy? What accounts for the marked differences in authoritarian regime change from one country to the next, from Asia to Africa to Latin America? Within all of this, what information and findings from research and theory could USAID utilize to help inform broad strategic planning decisions for [USAID] programming in a given country? 

Understanding the causes of regime change is a long-standing, central concern of comparative political science. But as the above quotation demonstrates, it is also a major concern of policy makers in the US government and elsewhere who specifically look to scholars for answers to these questions. This course provides students with the background and tools to understand contemporary theories of democratization, and gives students the opportunity put theory into practice with assignments that ask students to analyze of the status of democracy and the potential for democracy in particular countries. We begin the course with the foundational task of defining democracy. We then explore what we think we know about the factors and processes behind democratization, reviewing the major theories of democratization. We then broaden the focus to the study of democratic consolidation, the rise of hybrid forms of democracy and quality of democracy. Our theoretical discussions will be grounded in understanding democratization in Western Europe, Latin America, the countries of the former Soviet Union, Africa, and the Middle East.

Course Learning Objectives: By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand and adjudicate between theoretically distinct definitions of democracy
2. Understand the key approaches and debates regarding democratic transition and democratic consolidation
3. Use social scientific methods to analyze the causal variables behind successful democratization and increased quality of democracy

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1 USAID research project on Theories of Change in Democratization.
4. Understand some of the possible measures of democracy, and their strengths and shortcomings, including measures of ‘quality of democracy’.
5. Apply the definitions, approaches, and measures of democracy introduced in the course to specific country cases in order to evaluate current democratic conditions or the potential for transition and/or consolidation
6. Develop critical and analytical thinking, writing and discussion skills

Course Format: This course will combine readings, lectures, and active learning components.

• Assigned readings will provide a combination of theory, case studies and general context for a topic. They are often designed to provide the spark for discussions about theoretical ideas (e.g. what is democracy?) and enduring questions (does economic development lead to democracy?) or present divergent approaches. You will be expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class each day.
• Lectures will provide additional content to complement the readings, place readings in context with one another, and/or will help to explain complex ideas found in, or in addition to the readings. I will rarely lecture an entire 75 minutes, but there will be some lecture most days.
• Active learning components will include in class large discussion, small group work during class time, simulations, and assignments that ask you to apply your knowledge to real world cases.

Universal Access: As an instructor, it is important to me that all students are able to participate fully in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to participate fully. The McBurney Center provides useful assistance and documentation regarding physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disabilities: 263-2741, 263-6393 (TTY); 1305 Linden Drive or www.mcburney.wisc.edu. If you have a “visa” from the McBurney Center for special accommodations, please give me a copy of this the first week of class. If you need to meet with me about your needs, please come to office hours or email me for an appointment.

Books: Required books are available at A Room of One’s Own Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham St. Tel: 608-257-7888. You may also purchase them elsewhere.


Articles and Chapters: Other required readings are posted on Learn@UW.

Recommended: A daily newspaper with international coverage (e.g., The New York Times).
Assignments:
10% Learn@UW Questions: 3 Times during the semester
10% Transitions Simulation: Feb 20, in class.
20% Transitions Policy Memo: March 13
25% Arab Spring Essay: April 22
20% Quality of Democracy Policy Memo: May 12
15% In-Class Participation

Learn@UW Questions. Three times throughout the course, you must post 3 effective questions for discussion that you develop based on the assigned readings for the day. Questions must be posted by 7PM the night before class. Questions must relate to the assigned readings. These should be a mix of both clarification questions – e.g. what is the definition of political culture? And substantive questions – e.g. what is a more convincing approach to explaining democratization, structural or voluntaristic approaches? Questions will be graded on their potential for provoking discussion. Effective questions help us to better understand the new ideas, improve our critical thinking skills, and generate debate. All students should be prepared to discuss these questions in class the following day, though we will not always discuss any or all of them.

Transitions Simulation. Come to class ready to play your assigned part in a “transition to democracy”. Due to the nature of this activity, there will be no make-up for this simulation. Plan to be in class.

Transitions Policy Memo. 5-6 pages, double-spaced. In this memo you will prepare a short report on an authoritarian country we do not cover in the course and its possibilities for transition. Complete details and a list of country options will be distributed.

Arab Spring Essay. 6-8 pages, double-spaced. In this essay you will compare Egypt and Tunisia and explain what we should expect with regard to their prospects for democracy given what we know about theories of democratization. Complete details will be distributed.

Quality of Democracy Policy Memo. 5-6 pages, double-spaced. In this memo you will prepare a short report on a democratic country we do not cover in the course and assess the quality of its democracy. Complete details and a list of country options will be distributed.

In-Class Participation: This course will have regular in-class large discussion, debates and small group work. Occasionally students will prepare homework assignments before class. Sometimes students will be asked to answer questions in written form in class, based on the readings and the lectures. The professor will generally call on those that raise their hands, but she also reserves the right to “cold call” – that is, call on students by name to ask for their thoughts and commentary. These periodic “diagnostics” will assess listening and reading comprehension skills. The TA will help to track in-class participation by marking participation quantity and quality each day. There will be no formal grades for an individual days’ performance, but you will get a midterm update on your participation grade from your TA to know where you stand. The final participation grade will be assessed based on progress and overall performance by the end of the term.
Late Policy: Late papers will be penalized by one half of a letter grade lower per day late; i.e.: an “A” paper one day late shall be an “AB” paper. A paper shall be considered a day late if it is not received by your TA within one hour of the normal deadline. No late assignments will be accepted beyond one week. After one week, any late or missed work will be graded as an “F”.

A note on cheating and plagiarism: DON’T DO IT. If you feel a need to cheat or plagiarize, come see me or your TA before you do, and we can talk about other ways to succeed in the class. If you are caught attempting to represent someone else's work as your own or cheating in any other manner you will be subject to university discipline under rules published by the Board of Regents (UWS 14). If you have any questions regarding University policy, or what constitutes plagiarism, you can refer to the University Code of Conduct at this website: http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html. The writing center also provides a guide on proper acknowledgement of sources. If you are at all unsure of how to properly use sources, to avoid plagiarism download and read this guide, available at this link: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Writing Center: I encourage you to visit the campus writing center for help on writing your papers. The Center offers workshops, handouts, and consultations with writing instructors. Stop by 6171 Helen C. White, call for an appointment (263-1992), or consult the Center’s resources online at http://writing.wisc.edu/.

Religious Holidays: Absence due to observance of a religious holiday will not be counted as an absence. Students who will miss class due to religious holidays must inform me during the first two weeks of class whether they will miss class during the semester for religious reasons.

Lecture Etiquette & Electronic Devices: Please arrive on time. And turn off your cell phone or other devices. Please do not text or talk on your device in class.

Laptop Policy: You may use a laptop in class, but if you do, you must sit in the front row in order to create less distraction to others. A recent study shows that the use of laptops – even just by students sitting near you - leads to lower grades (http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/story/2013/08/14/technology-laptop-grades.html). Of course, laptops should only be used to read course materials or take notes – no email, no Facebook, no web-surfing…. you wouldn’t dream of doing that during class, now, would you?

Learn@UW: I will post hand-outs on Learn@UW, where you can access them if you miss class. I will also post power point lecture slides after each lecture. This does not mean that you should not attend class. You will be responsible for any material presented, or additional assignments announced, in class.

Final grades will be determined according to the following official UW grading scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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If you have questions about a grade, please talk to me or your TA!
Schedule of Topics and Associated Readings: (All readings listed are required)

*I reserve the right to modify this schedule of readings and assignments as needs arise in the class.*

I. Foundational Concepts – Democracy & Authoritarianism

Tues Jan 21: Course Overview, Learning Objectives and Basic Concepts

Thurs Jan 23: Democracy: Procedural Conceptions


Tues Jan 28: Democracy: Participatory and Deliberative Conceptions

*Be prepared for small group work in class in which you discuss procedural, participatory and deliberative conceptions of democracy.*


Thurs Jan 30: Types of Authoritarianism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, Sultanistic


II. Transitions to Democracy: Theoretical Approaches

Tues Feb 4: Modernization: Does Economic Development Lead to Democracy?


Thurs Feb 6: “Western Values” and Democracy


Tues Feb. 11: The Search For Structural Preconditions

Thurs Feb 13: Elite Approaches and Strategic Interaction

Tues Feb 18: Democratization “From Below”: The Role of Civil Society & Gender

Thurs Feb 20: Transitions Simulation
- Prepare for simulation in class with materials distributed in advance. Graded component.

Tues Feb 25: The International Dimension

III. “Third Wave” Democratization: Does Region Matter?

Thurs Feb 27: Latin America: Variation on a Theme

Tues March 4: Eastern Europe: Dual Economic and Political Transitions

Thurs March 6: Sub-Saharan Africa: The Importance of Regime Type

Tues March 11: Middle East: The “Resource Curse”?
IV. “Democratic Consolidation” or “Democratic Careening”?

Thurs March 13: Conceptualizing Democratic Consolidation

Transitions Policy Memo Due in Class


SPRING BREAK March 17-21!

Tues March 25: Democratic Careening: Hybrid Regimes


V. Rethinking Democratization, Consolidation and Careening through Case Studies

Thurs March 27: Rethinking Democratization in England and Germany


Tues April 1: “Delegative Democracy” in Peru & the Long Transition In Chile


Thurs April 3: Regime Cycles in Post-Soviet States


Tues April 8: NO CLASS

Thurs April 10: Sub-Saharan Africa: Kenya in 2002 and 2007

Tues April 15: Facebook and the Arab Spring (Focus on Egypt and Tunisia)

Thurs April 17: The Arab Spring, Continued

VI. Quality of Democracy: Focus on Latin America

Tues April 22: Defining and Measuring “Quality of Democracy” in Latin America
Arab Spring Essay Due in Class

Thurs April 24: Quality of Democracy: Chile and Peru Compared

Tues April 29: Participatory Democracy in Brazil

Thurs May 1: Gender and Deliberative Democracy in Argentina

Tues May 6: Ethnic Inclusion in “Radical” Democracies

May 8: Course Summary & Wrap Up

Quality of Democracy Memo Due Monday, May 12.