Democracy: Threats and Resilience

Spring 2028

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Class hours: TBA
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In earlier eras, the main threat to democracy was the suspension or falsification of elections—through military coups or authoritarian takeovers—but in recent years the threats to democracy have instead targeted its support structure, from parliamentary procedures and the rule of law to democratic norms and culture writ large, while leaving elections relatively untouched. Thus, 21st century threats to democratic governance look very different than the threats of the past, and it is precisely the changing nature of those threats that this course examines, along with what makes a democracy robust and resilient.

Google Classroom: The Swedish Program uses the Google Classroom platform for all its courses. On the course Classroom page, you will find the readings, assignments, and lecture notes, as well as links to useful resources for further study. The course platform is also where you will submit your assignments. It also functions as a discussion forum outside of class: you are highly encouraged to participate in extending class discussions by posting questions and links throughout the semester. I will use the course platform to post links to articles and books that are relevant to the class, as well as reminders of deadlines and questions I have for you as a group outside of class.

Readings: All of the readings for the course will be available to download on the course platform. You can also find direct links to each reading right here in the syllabus.

Laptops & phones: You may only use electronic devices for note-taking and solving group assignments. One cannot be engaged in the class while scrolling social media or browsing the internet (even if only to look up something relevant to the class discussion). Moreover, it is distracting for other students and discourteous toward them. In particular, phone use is *strictly prohibited* during class time (unless I explicitly state otherwise). *If I see you using a phone during class, I will mark you as absent*.

Grading: Your grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

Active participation:	25%
Case study presentations:	20%
Case study write-ups:	30%
Final case study report:	25%

Active participation (25%): This course is a seminar, which means that it requires not only attendance—which is mandatory—but also active and constructive participation in discussions and group assignments. It is imperative that you are engaged in both the general class discussions and the various in-class group assignments. Besides active engagement in class discussions and asking questions during my and other students' presentations, you can participate by being active on the Classroom stream—sharing observations, links, and recommendations—or by coming to talk to me during office hours. It is also good practice to prepare some questions you want to discuss about the reading or the topic of that day's class.

Case studies: The assignments for the course consist of a series of three linked case studies on a single topic area. Your topic area could be, for example, deliberative democracy, or democratic backsliding, or militant democracy—any topic area within the scope of the course is fair game. For each of your first two case studies, you will do an in-class presentation as well as submit a write-up. At the end of the semester, you will combine your two initial case studies with a third case study into a final case study report.

Case study presentations (2 x 10%): You will do two individual in-class case study presentations during the semester. Each presentation should introduce the class to one of your case studies, outlining the larger context as well the empirical evidence and providing your analysis of the case study. The presentations should be about 10 minutes in length.

Case study write-ups (2 x 15%): In addition to the presentation, you will also submit a write-up for each of your first two case studies. In the write-up, you will go into more detail about your case study, expanding on both the empirical evidence and your analysis from the presentation.

Final case study report (25%): For your final assignment, you will add a third case study as well as provide an analytical framework for all three case studies, combining them into a larger whole. The aim of the final case study report is to use your three case studies as a foundation for a more general analysis of your topic area. I will provide guidelines for the final report, as well as for the presentations and case study write-ups, on the course Classroom site.

Late assignments: Assignments that are submitted after the deadline and without prior agreement will be marked down. The late penalty will be progressively more severe the later the assignment is submitted.

Academic dishonesty: Any form of academic dishonesty is a violation of our code of conduct and will result in disciplinary actions. Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will result in an automatic F for the assignment, and may also result in an immediate F for the course as a whole, based on the assessment of the Director of Studies and the Executive Director. If you want to use AI to assist your writing, you must adhere to the following guidelines: AI-assisted writing is permissible as long as its use is properly documented and does not substitute for students' doing the actual writing work. For all written take-home assignments, students who have used AI to assist them are required to submit a summary describing how they have used AI to help them complete the assignment (producing text, proofreading, finding citations, etc). In addition, students also have to clearly indicate which passages have been produced or assisted by AI, for example in a footnote that details how AI was used in that particular instance. Failure to acknowledge one's use of AI to complete an assignment will count as academic dishonesty and be subject to the same penalties as outright plagiarism or other forms of cheating.

Course learning outcomes: At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge about democratic theories, the processes and institutions of a well-functioning democracy, and the threats and challenges facing contemporary democracies
- Apply the general concepts and evidence presented in the course to case studies and a topic area of their choosing
- Prepare clear and concise presentations
- Produce a long, rigorous, empirically based research paper based on the case studies they have done throughout the semester

Schedule:

Wk 1a *Introduction: Why democracy?*

Wk 1b *Measuring democracy*

Reading: V-Dem Institute: Democracy Report
Przeworski, "Who Decides What Is Democratic?"
Warren, "A Problem-Based Approach to Democratic Theory"
Tudor, "What Democracy Does . . . And Does Not Do"

Section I: Theories of democracy

Wk 2a *Participatory democracy*

Reading: Lummis, *Radical Democracy* (excerpts)
Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy"
Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited"

Wk 2b *Deliberative democracy*

Reading: Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy"
Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy"
Dryzek, "Legitimacy and Economy in Deliberative Democracy"

Wk 3a *Representative democracy*

Reading: Urbinati & Warren, "The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory"
Pitkin, "Representation and Democracy: Uneasy Alliance"
Rehfeld, "Towards a General Theory of Political Representation"
OECD, "Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes"

Wk 3b *Pluralist democracy*

Reading: Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (excerpts)
Bickford, "Reconfiguring Pluralism: Identity and Institutions in the Inegalitarian Polity"
Rogers, "Race and Republicanism"

Section II: Making democracy work

Wk 4a *Elections and voting systems*

Reading: Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy* (excerpts)
Boix, "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies"
Stokes, "Political Parties and Democracy"

Wk 4b *Democratic institutions and the rule of law*

Reading: Meron, "Democracy and the Rule of Law"
O'Donnell, "Why the Rule of Law Matters"
Weingast, "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law"
Lewis, *Who Is Government?* (excerpts)

Wk 5a *Democratic procedures*

Reading: Castoriadis, "Democracy as Procedure and Democracy as Regime"
Beckman, "Deciding the Demos: Three Conceptions of Democratic Legitimacy"
Landwehr, "How Can We Agree on Democratic Procedures: Dimensions of Conflict in the Political Process Space"

Wk 5b *Multi-level governance*

Reading: Dahl, *On Democracy* (excerpts)
Rothstein, "Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy Versus Quality of Government"
Blakeley, "Local Governance and Local Democracy: The Barcelona Model"
Mounk, "The Undemocratic Dilemma"

Wk 6a *Democratic norms and practices*

Reading: Anderson, "Democracy: Instrumental vs. Non-Instrumental Value"
Helmke & Rath, "Defining and Measuring Democratic Norms"
Booth Chapman, "Democratic Norms and the Ethics of Resistance"
Gordon, "The Authoritarian Personality Revisited: Reading Adorno in the Age of Trump"

Wk 6b *Citizens' rights and obligations*

Reading: Besson, "Human Rights and Democracy in a Global Context: Decoupling and Recoupling"
Benhabib, "Claiming Rights across Borders: International Human Rights and Democratic Sovereignty"
Klosko, "Cosmopolitanism, Political Obligation, and the Welfare State"

Section III: Threats to democracy and democratic backsliding

Wk 7a *The impacts of inequality*

Reading: Hacker & Pierson, "Winner-Take-All Politics Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States"
Lafer, *The One Percent Solution: How Corporations Are Remaking America One State at a Time* (excerpts)

Scheve & Stasavage, "Wealth Inequality and Democracy"

Case study write-up 1 due!

Wk 7b *Restrictions on participation*

Reading: Fraga et. al., "American Democracy and Voter Suppression"
Hayes & McKee, "The Intersection of Redistricting, Race, and Participation"
Portillo et. al., "The Disenfranchisement of Voters of Color: Redux"

Wk 8a *Capturing democratic institutions*

Reading: Diamond, "Democratic Regression in Comparative Perspective: Scope, Methods, and Causes"
Levitsky & Way, "The New Competitive Authoritarianism"
Ermakoff, "Law against the Rule of Law: Assaulting Democracy"
Moynihan, "Delegitimization, Deconstruction and Control: Undermining the Administrative State"

Wk 8b *Disinformation and polarization*

Reading: Svolik, "Polarization versus Democracy"
Campbell, "Social Capital in a Divided America: The Relationship between Economic Bridging and Affective Polarization"
Schiffrin, *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy* (excerpts)
Stier, "Democracy, Autocracy and the News: The Impact of Regime Type on Media Freedom"

Wk 9a *Backsliding case studies I*

Reading: Bermeo, "On Democratic Backsliding"
Little & Meng, "What We Do and Do Not Know about Democratic Backsliding"

Dionne & Dulani, "Resisting Executive Power Grabs: Lessons from Malawi"
Vaishnav, "Legislative Capture in India: Is Democracy Back from the Brink?"
Mietzner, "Elite Collusion in Indonesia: How It Has Both Enabled and Limited Executive Aggrandizement"

Wk 9b *Backsliding case studies II*

Reading: Carothers, "Lessons About Backsliding and Resistance"
Waldner & Lust, "Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding"
Enyedi & Mikola, "Legislative Capture in Hungary: Well-Managed Autocratization"
Mettler, *Four Threats* (excerpts)
Lieberman & Schlozman, "Democratic Backsliding and Ethnic Politics: The Republican Party in the United States"

Section IV: Democratic resilience and restoration

Wk 10a *Transitions to democracy*

Reading: Linz & Stepan, "Toward Consolidated Democracies"
Nord et. al., "When Autocratization Is Reversed: Episodes of U-Turns Since 1900"
Epstein et. al., "Democratic Transitions"
Mukand & Rodrik, "The Political Economy of Liberal Democracy"
McFaul, "Transitions from Postcommunism"
Case study write-up 2 due!

Wk 10b *Militant democracy*

Reading: Bateman, "Democracy-Reinforcing Hardball: Can Breaking Democratic Norms Preserve Democratic Values?"

Kis, "From Electoral Autocracy to Democratic Restoration"
Hillion et. al., "Democratic Frontsliding in the European Union the Problem of Autocratic Enclaves and the Case for Restorative Disobedience"

Wk 11a *Institutional safeguards*

Reading: Ingham, "Institutional Forbearance as a Mechanism of Democratic Stability"
Laebens & Lührmann, "What Halts Democratic Erosion? The Changing Role of Accountability"
Jacobs & Choate, "Democratic Capacity: Election Administration as Bulwark and Target"
Mares, "Defending Parliament Responses of Mainstream Parties to Parliamentary Erosion"
Garcia-Holgado, "Overruling the Executive: Judicial Strategies to Resist Democratic Erosion"

Wk 11b *Civil society*

Reading: Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (excerpts)
Chenoweth & Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works* (excerpt)
Gamboa, "How Oppositions Fight Back"
Spade, "Solidarity Not Charity"
Schulkind, "The Activity of Popular Organizations during the Paris Commune of 1871"

Wk 12a *Restoration case studies*

Reading: Bianchi et. al., "The Myth of Democratic Resilience"
Rakner, "Civil Society Resistance to Democratic Backsliding in Africa's Pluralist Regimes"
Tworzecki, "Legislative Capture and Democratic Careening in Poland"
Moncagatta & Pazmiño, " A Tale of a Failed Recovery Ecuador's Democratic Stagnation"

Wk 12b *Conclusion: designing robust democracy*

Reading: Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (excerpts)
Shein & Emmons, "Paths to Democratic Resilience in an Era of Backsliding"
Fung, "Continuous Institutional Innovation and the Pragmatic Conception of Democracy"
Wolkenstein, "Remedying the Anti-Liberal Capture of Constitutional Courts"
Pornschlegel, "From Democratic Resilience to Democratic Security"

Wk 13 Exam week: Final case study report due!