

**Antalya Bilim University**  
**Department of Political Science and International Relations, POLS 401 /POLS 357**  
**Comparative Democracy**  
**Fall 2023**

Class Time: Friday 10.00-12:50

Office Hours:Thursday 14:00-15:00

Cerem I. Cenker-Özek  
[cerem.cenker@antalya.edu.tr](mailto:cerem.cenker@antalya.edu.tr)  
(A2-70)

In the last few decades, a broad sense of optimism about a global democratic future has been gradually replaced by increasing skepticism about the possibility of such a future. The over-rated optimism of the early 1990s can well be attributed to the end of communism across Central and Eastern European states as well as the former Soviet Union states, which was an influential external shock to the global political order. For many, the end of communism and the triumph of liberalism were synonymous. Yet time has proven this assumption wrong. We observe substantial variance in former communist states' performance of political and economic liberalization. Moreover, irrespective of any recent regime change, we also observe democratic backsliding in some of the oldest democratic regimes such as the US and the UK. The prospects of democratic regimes pose not only interesting, but also urgent research puzzles/questions.

This course aims to tackle some of the fundamentals of these research puzzles. The first of these puzzles is a simple question without a simple answer: what is a democratic regime? How do we recognize a democratic regime when we see one? These questions relate to conceptual, institutional and behavioral discussions about democratic regimes. It also hints us about the possibility of discussing about gradations of democracy and hybrid regimes as well as the autocratic regimes. Another research puzzle is about the current global democratic backsliding. What has gone wrong recently so that we have started observing a heavier reliance on majoritarian features of democratic regimes than their liberal features? Do culture and politics explain rise of populism, even across the most advanced democracies, or is it the economy to blame? Last but not least, how does COVID-19 pandemic influence the future of democratic regimes? Can democracy survive the pandemic?

The students are encouraged to explore these questions in this course by relying on different case studies as well as cross-country and cross-cultural datasets. Podcasts, TEDx Talks, and other social media/internet sources are also among the data sources/class materials.

### **Course Structure & course materials**

The instructor will make all course materials available to students via the LMS system.

## **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement. You will be subject to disciplinary action and punishment if you are caught plagiarizing.

## **Assessment Criteria:**

- 1) Attendance & Participation (10%): Attendance is compulsory in this course. Students who miss more than %70 of the course fail the course automatically (FX).** Students are expected to come to class prepared and actively participate in the weekly discussions. Your grade is comprised of both attendance and participation.
- 2) In-Class Reaction Papers (20%):** You will write a total of 5 in-class reaction papers. At the beginning of class, you will write a reaction to 1-2 questions posed to you regarding the readings. This will give students an opportunity to evaluate the readings and prepare for class discussion. The reaction papers will address specific questions posed to you in this syllabus on the assigned readings and ask you to share your ideas on these questions, informed from the articles. Students will then be asked to share their reactions during class discussion. The highest 3 will comprise 20% of your grade.
- 3) Mid-term Exam (30%):** Students will have one mid-term exam which will be based on all the course material we cover until the exam date.
- 4) Final Exam (40%):** Students will have one final exam at the end of the semester. The majority of the final exam questions will be based on the course material we cover after the midterm exam.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 Introduction**

- Course Overview. Syllabus.
- Please read and keep a copy of the syllabus. You are responsible for the content of the syllabus.

### **Week 2-3 Defining democracy**

- Schmitter, Philippe & Karl, Terry Lynn. "What democracy is...and is not?" *Journal of Democracy*, Summer (1991): 3-16.
- Huntington, Samuel. "Democracy's Third Wave" *Journal of Democracy* 2, no.2 (1991): 12-34.

**Discussion question:** What is democracy?

### **Week 4-5 Economic and social prerequisites of democracy**

- Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *The American Political Science Review* 53, no.1 (1959): 69-105.
- Przeworski, Adam & Limongi, Fernando. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49, no.2 (1997):155-183.

**Discussion question:** State and discuss TWO social requisites of democracy

### **Week 6-7 Regime classifications /Hybrid regimes**

- Levistky, Steven & Way, Lucan. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no.2 (2002): 51-65.
- Carothers, Christopher. "The Surprising Instability of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 4 (2018): 129-135
- Levistky, Steven & Way, Lucan. "The New Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 31, no.1 (2020): 51-65.
- Fukuyama, Francis. "30 Years of World Politics: What Has Changed? *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 31, no.1 (2020): 11-21

**Discussion question:** What is the difference between a democratic regime and a competitive authoritarian regime? What is the difference between a competitive authoritarian regime and an authoritarian regime?

### **⇒ Some important datasets on regime classifications**

V-Dem: <https://www.v-dem.net/en/>

Freedom House: <https://freedomhouse.org/>

IDEA: <http://www.idea.int/sod-assessments/>

Electoral integrity: <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/>

### **Week 8 Midterm Exam**

- **No class**

### **Week 9-10 Populism and liberal democracy**

- William A. Galston. "The populist challenge to Liberal Democracy" *Journal of Democracy*, 29, no.2 (2018): 5-19.
- Cas Mudde - Populism in the Twenty-First Century: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/andrea-mitchell-center/cas-mudde-populism-twenty-first-century>
- Damien Bol et.al., 2021. The effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on political support: Some good news for democracy? *European Journal of Political Research*, 60: 697-505
- How to save democracy-Yacsha Mounk TEDX talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mx11jGSeWo>

**Discussion question:** State and explain TWO ways populism may be considered as a threat to democracy.

### **Week 11-14 Democracy in a digital world**

- Pew Research Center, February 2020, "Many Experts Say Digital Disruption Will Hurt Democracy" <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/02/21/many-tech-experts-say-digital-disruption-will-hurt-democracy/>
- Deibert, R. 2019. "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: Three Painful Truths about Social Media." *Journal of Democracy*, 30, no.1, 25-39.

- Deibert, R. 2021. Digital Subversion: The Threat to Democracy. 18th Annual Seymour Martin Lipset Lecture. <https://www.ned.org/events/eighteenth-annual-seymour-martin-lipset-lecture-ronald-deibert-on-digital-subversion-the-threat-to-democracy/>
- Natalie Marechal. 2021. "The Future of Platform Power: Fixing the Business Model." Journal of Democracy, 32, no.3, 157-62.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2021. "Making The Internet Safe for Democracy." Journal of Democracy, 32, no.2, 37-44
- Tom Davidson. 2023. "The Dangers of Runaway AI" Journal of Democracy, 34, no.4, 132-140.

**Discussion question:** State and explain ONE advantage of digital technologies for the future of democracy, and ONE disadvantage of these technologies.