

Carleton University
Department of Political Science
<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

Winter 2025

Political Science 4505 B
Transitions to and from Democracy

Professor: Peter Attack
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Class Session: Tuesday 2:35-5:35pm (Confirm location on Carleton Central)
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2pm
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Welcome to the course:

Course Description This is a theoretically guided seminar course that aims to provide the foundations critically to conceptualize, study, and research processes of democratization in a comparative perspective. We live in a time of ebb and flow for and against democracy, where since the 1970s and 1980s in Latin America to the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and Russia, to the Arab spring and this fall in South Korea and Bangladesh pro-democracy waves have upended and then transformed large parts of the world. Yet at this same moment, democracy has faltered and failed, or at least come under threat, in places from Afghanistan to Russia and Venezuela to the United States and various states across the Sahel belt in Africa. We will be applying theory and historical sociology and the comparative method to attempt to understand what is behind and beneath the fall and rise and failures of democracy. The purpose of this course is not to denounce and morally condemn opponents of democracy (even if we agree to at the least to prefer it), but rather to understand the reasons and forces for its rise and fall.

Prerequisite: fourth-year Honours standing or permission of the Department,

Pedagogy, expertise and trusting our fellow searchers, learners and students.

In Canada we are blessed with the expertise and unconscious biases that come from being members and descendants of all the waves of all kinds of diasporas from economic and ecological to political and sectarian. And those of us who are descendants of First Nations have experienced dislocation and disruption. Our very experience grants us knowledge and understanding about these cases and waves of democratization.

For example, as your instructor, I am the descendant of Loyalists, the losers and refugees from the American Revolution who understood the costs of revolution and sought to establish a new nation based on peace, order and good government and the prohibition of slavery. I also have

family members, neighbors and friends who experienced the fall of democracy in Chile, a civil war in Sri Lanka, the end of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and past students from various genocides, democratic failures and civil wars. I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation on the process of losing democracy to a democratically elected President in Peru, and its link to the imposition of economic reforms. My hope and expectation is that we will share and use our knowledges to begin to answer some of our questions about these processes of the rise and fall of democracy.

To that end some students may have a profound knowledge and experience of a different case than those suggested in the syllabus. The last time I gave this seminar I had students from the Diasporas in Lebanon and Iraq who gave presentations of limits of Consociational (or sectarian) Democracy in Lebanon and Iraq. Suggest with readings your topic or case, and we will try to fit it in and lose others less intriguing.

This is an in-person course.

Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to impart a series of skills while also delivering ideas, questions and knowledge about the topic at hand. The design of the assignments is cumulative, wherein each step builds on the previous assignment until there is a template or method students can use to engage in a structured search for answers about a topic they are intrigued by.

Skills: Discuss (or participation). Do you contribute ideas or information that provoke insight and further debate? Do you contribute in ways that foster participation from other voices, other students who may feel shy about contributing.

Present: Did your seminar presentation home in on the key ideas, controversies and contradictions presented in the reading. Did you bring in outside sources, concepts or ideas that furthered our understanding of the material. Did you use interesting graphics, illustrations to intrigue and educate your fellow students. Did you propose interesting questions that provoked thoughtful discussions?

Reflect: Did you incorporate other's ideas and insights into your thinking on your topic? Have you got a clearer answer or at least deeper questions about the topic at hand. The purpose of piece is not to criticize the reading, but instead to use it to question more deeply the topic.

Argument: The final paper is meant to be a structured argument proposing answers to your issues and questions. How would you explain this? Why does it matter?

Content: What are the theories about the rise and especially the fall of democracy? Why does democracy matter? Why do people fight for it? Why and how does it die? Do you display learned knowledge about this issue, in contributions in class, in your presentations, in your papers?

Course Requirements:

Participation: 20%. While attendance will be noted at the discretion of the lecturer, participation requires thoughtful and learned contributions to class discussions that reflect course readings. Those who are silent even if usually present will not achieve high marks for this component. Students will be assessed on their contributions to the course in terms of thoughtful commentary and ideas during seminar discussions.

Seminar Presentation: 20%. Students will be responsible for making 1 seminar presentation based on one of the readings from weeks 3-12. The presentation should summarize the major ideas of the reading, as well as provide a critique and possible questions to spark discussion. Students may also make use of outside reading and knowledge to further enrich their presentations. Failure to produce a seminar on the date agreed upon will result in receiving a zero on the assignment. The only acceptable reason for failing to lead the seminar is a medical certificate noting a truly incapacitating illness.

Seminar paper: 20%. Due one week after your presentation is marked and returned. Since they are being returned during the week after presentations, you will have a minimum of two weeks to do the paper. This paper will be based on the student's own presentations and the discussion that followed from the presentation. The paper should take into account ideas raised during the class and any subsequent ideas sparked by the discussion.

Take home exam or paper: 40%. Paper is due on the last day of the class at the end of the exam period or April 26th. The paper will be an application of a theory to a particular case of democratization or the failure of democracy in one case.

Course Texts:

[Stephen Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* \(New York, Broadway Books, 2018\).](#)

Price: \$25.9

[Ian Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory* \(Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003\).](#)

[Paperback, January 16, 2006\).](#) Price \$51.50

These books can be ordered through [Octopus Books](#):

HOURS

Mon - Fri: 9AM - 7PM

Sat: 10AM - 6PM

Sun: 11AM - 5PM

Octopus Books

116 Third Avenue at Bank St.

Ottawa



[\(613\) 233-2589](tel:6132332589)

octopus@octopusbooks.ca

Important notes

- All written assignments must be submitted electronically via Brightspace.
- Students' emails will generally be answered within a couple of working days in order of receipt (the instructor does not generally answer emails outside of working hours or during weekends). There are some time periods that are busier, especially close to due dates, so students must be sure to leave sufficient time for answers. Each student

should make sure to include the course number and their name in the subject of each email.

Weekly Schedule

Introduction to the course **Section I – The State of Democratic Theory and Fascism, populism and democracy and its discontents.**

Week 1 – Tuesday January 7th “Introduction:” is this what democracy looks like? What democracy is and is not.

“The Common Good,” in Shapiro, Ian, *The State of Democratic Theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 1-34. Chapter 4 Getting and Keeping Democracy.”

Amartya Sen, (1999) “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy*, 10:3, 3-17.

Week 2 – January 14th Lecture: Populism, Neo-populism and Fascism

Federico Finkelstein, *From Fascism to Populism in History* Introduction

Cammack, Paul. “The resurgence of populism in Latin America.” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* Vol. 19, 149-161.

Week 3 – January 21st Seminars begin Presentation 1: Democracy as a Limited game or a ruse to fleece the many?

Topic 1 How the game is run: “Deliberation against Domination?” and “Power and Democratic Competition” in Shapiro, Ian, *The State of Democratic Theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, 35-77.

Topic 2 Like it doesn’t cater to rich and abandons the poor. Hands held High Linkin Park.

“Democracy and Distribution” in Shapiro, Ian, *The State of Democratic Theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, 104-145.

Why is it that the poor have not taxed the rich into extinction? 104-124

Do ideas and dreams silence the poor? 125-145.

Section II – Transitions from Democracy

Week 4 – January 28th How democracy died to Fascism

Topic 1 Fascism in Italy and Germany

Federico Finkelstein, *From Fascism to Populism in History*, Chapter 1, pp 31-97.

Topic 2 Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt *How Democracies Die* Chapter one. Fateful Alliances, 1-32 The cases.

Week 5 – February 4th How Democracy Died to Populism

Topic 1: The difference in time and style: fascism and neo-populism.

Federico Finkelstein, Chapter Two, Populism in History.

Topic 2: Cases of authoritarian subversion of democracy. Stephen Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *Subverting Democracy*, Chapter 4, 72-96.

Week 6 – February 11th How democracies died to Corruption

Afghanistan: Chayes, Sarah *Thieves of State* (W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 2015) Chapters 1, 5, 11 on Afghanistan

Mozambique: Burgis, Tom. *The Looting Machine* (Public Affairs, New York, 2015) Introduction, Chapter One on Mozambique.

Other possibilities Rwanda, Venezuela or Zimbabwe?

Week 7 – Reading week

Note: No in person office hours but call me or email me.

Section Three: Week Eight Transitions to democracy

Week 8 – February 25th Truth commissions and International Courts

Topic 1: Truth and reconciliation commissions:

James L. Gibson, "The contributions of truth to reconciliation: Lessons from South Africa." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Volume 50, Issue 3 2006. 409-432

Topic 2: Rwanda and Gacaca courts: A new vision of grassroots justice or reconciliation.

Max Rettig, "Gacaca Courts, truth, justice and reconciliation in post conflict Rwanda." *African Studies Review*, Vol 51, No. 3 December 2008, pp 25-50

Topic 3: Does peace trump justice? Or without justice can there be peace?

Roy Licklider, "Ethical Advice, Conflict management vs. human rights in ending civil wars." *Journal of Human Rights*, 7:4 2008. pp.376-387.

Week 9 - March 4th– Examples from South America "South America: Constrained Transitions (Chapters on Argentina, Chile and the Concluding Reflections)" in Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, 190-233.

Topic 1 Argentina

Topic 2 Chile

Topic 3 Conclusions and reflections on the end of bureaucratic authoritarianism

Week 10 – March 11th – Examples from Post-Communist Europe "Post-Communist Europe: The Most Complex Paths and Tasks (Chapters 15 and 21 – Post-Communist Pre-histories and Concluding Reflections)" in Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, 235-254 and 43

Topic 1: Post Communist Prehistories Chapter 15

Topic 2: The case of Poland. Chapter 16

Topic 3: The fall of the Wall, The collapse of the DDR.

Week 11 – March 18th Bolivia: A new form of Democracy or the same old Caudillismo?

In recent years Bolivia has offered a different path with resistance and rebellion and democracy from the base. Water wars and the rise of Evo Morales and attempts to found an inclusive state. Moises Arce and Roberta Rice, "Societal Protest in Post Stabilization Bolivia." *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 44 No.1, 2009.

Amy Kennemore and Gregory Weeks, "Twenty First Century Socialism? The elusive search for a Post Neoliberal Development model in Bolivia and Ecuador." *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 30 No.3 July 2011.

Nancy Postero, "Morales's MAS government Building indigenous popular hegemony in Bolivia." *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 37, No. 3, 2010

Week 12 - March 25th New movements on the road to transition

Topic 1: Rebellion against hegemony, against democratic representatives and for democracy. Piqueteros in Argentina.

Epstein, Edward. "The Piquetero Movement of Greater Buenos Aires: Working Class Protest During the Current Argentina Crisis." Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies. 28:55&56 (2003):11-36.

Topic 2: The role of NGO's in democratizing international organizations.

Patomäki, Heikki and Teivo Teivainen, *A Possible World: Democratic Transformation of Global Institutions*, New York: Zed Books, 2004, Chapter 6, 111-138.

Topic 3: Non-violent revolutions:

Otpor and the colour revolutions. Srda Popovic *Blueprint for Revolution*. (United States, Spigel and Grau, 2015). Chapter TBA.

Week 13 – April 1st Trump against Democracy: Is he a populist, an authoritarian, a fascist or just a crisis of hegemony and representation?

Is Trump a symptom of a deeper political crisis or a threat to democracy?

Topic 1: Is this a crisis of the republican party?

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, Chapter 7 "The Unravelling."

Topic 2: Or is it Trump?

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, Chapter 8 "Trump against the guardrails."

Week 14 April 8th

Conclusions and review

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

Mental Health and Wellbeing:

<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services:

<https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):

<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389,

<https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>

ood2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic:

<https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University.

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information

about sexual violence and/or support, visit:
<https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within three working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last day to withdraw from full fall term and fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment is September 30th, 2024. The last day for a fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or the winter portion of two-term courses is January 31, 2025. The last day for academic withdrawal from full fall and late fall courses is November 15, 2024. The last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses is March 15, 2025.

WDN: For students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term the term WDN will be a

permanent notation that appears on their official transcript.

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Fall courses: December 9-21, 2024. **Winter and Fall/Winter courses:** April 11-26, 2025 (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton 2024-2025 Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as *"presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own."*

This can include:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in *"substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."*

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been

