

### Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

I have four years of experience teaching as a professor and instructor, and over five additional years as a teaching assistant. I have taught in classrooms and online at Texas A&M University (College Station and Qatar) and the University at Buffalo SUNY. I have received terrific evaluations at each of these institutions. I am providing my Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 course evaluations and a syllabus for my Empirical Democratic Theory class. This is an upper level undergraduate class that is central to my research and teaching interests. Students also enjoy the topics in this course, and I believe the lessons we cover help my students better understand the necessary conditions for obtaining and keeping democracy.

You will find that my students evaluated my teaching and class with energetic approbation, and higher than other courses in my department. I taught this class in central Texas, USA, during a very contentious electoral year in which questions of democratic backsliding were a common concern. There were many students from both conservative and liberal backgrounds in my class, which I know because of our conversations during office hours and because I wrote their letters of recommendation for graduate and law schools. We had productive in-class discussions about democracy because I only allow discussions of the science of politics. Yet, not a single person made a negative response in my evaluations for the entire year. Students clearly think my democracy course and my approach to teaching the science of politics is terrific. I hope you do, too.

Attachments:

- Fall 2019 course evaluations
- Spring 2020 course evaluations
- Fall 2019 syllabus

## Statistical Summary

Texas A&M University, College Station  
 Fall 2019  
 POLS 352 501  
 End-of-Term  
 Austin M. Mitchell

### Demographics

Total Number of Evaluations Submitted: 18

Total Number of Students Enrolled in the Class: 33

Percentage of students who submitted an evaluation: 54.55%

	Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
College:	Liberal Arts	18	100.00
Classification:	SOPHOMORE	3	16.67
	JUNIOR	5	27.78
	SENIOR	10	55.56
Campus:	COLLEGE STATION	18	100.00
Is This Course Required?	Yes	10	55.56
	No	8	44.44
Expected Grade in Course:	A	13	72.22
	B	5	27.78
Sex:	FEMALE	6	33.33
	MALE	12	66.67

### Items

The following items were used in the appraisal for this section. Mean scores are calculated on a 5 point basis: A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1.

A = Strongly Agree  
 B = Agree  
 C = Undecided  
 D = Disagree  
 E = Strongly Disagree

Items	Resp	A	B	C	D	E	Mean StDev	*View Comments
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The instructor seemed well prepared for each class.	18	N	14	4	0	0	0	4.78	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	77.78	22.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.416	
The instructor seemed to care whether the students learned.	18	N	17	1	0	0	0	4.94	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	94.44	5.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.229	
The instructor seemed enthusiastic about the material that was presented.	18	N	15	3	0	0	0	4.83	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	83.33	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.373	
The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject.	18	N	13	5	0	0	0	4.72	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	72.22	27.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.448	
The instructor's presentations added to my understanding of the material.	18	N	12	6	0	0	0	4.67	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	66.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.471	
The instructor adequately answered questions from students.	18	N	13	5	0	0	0	4.72	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	72.22	27.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.448	
I believe this instructor was an effective teacher.	18	N	14	4	0	0	0	4.78	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	77.78	22.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.416	
The exams/projects were presented and graded fairly.	18	N	15	3	0	0	0	4.83	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	83.33	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.373	
Help was readily available for questions and/or homework outside of class.	18	N	14	4	0	0	0	4.78	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	77.78	22.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.416	
On the whole, this is a good instructor.	17	N	14	3	0	0	0	4.82	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	82.35	17.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.381	
I would take another course from this professor.	18	N	16	2	0	0	0	4.89	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	88.89	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.314	
The course was well-organized.	18	N	14	3	1	0	0	4.72	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	77.78	16.67	5.56	0.00	0.00	0.558	
The course requirements were clear.	18	N	13	5	0	0	0	4.72	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	72.22	27.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.448	
The amount of work and/or reading was reasonable for the credit hours received in the course.	18	N	13	5	0	0	0	4.72	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	72.22	27.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.448	
On the whole, this was a good course.	18	N	15	3	0	0	0	4.83	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	83.33	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.373	

Overall Mean \*Overall Mean score does not include instructor selected items.

4.78

**\* If a link is not active, this represents that no comments were given by students for that item.**

## Item Comments

### Items on the Appraisal

**The instructor seemed well prepared for each class.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] This professor was always prepared for class. He knew what he was talking about.
2. [A] great presentations
3. [A] Very well prepared, had extremely detailed power-points with in depth breakdowns of the readings as well as background/ outside information.

**The instructor seemed to care whether the students learned.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Very engaging in class
2. [A] We learned a lot in his class; some of which I still do not understand, but he always answered my questions if I had any.
3. [A] always involved the students in discussion
4. [A] I could not agree more that Instructor Mitchell cares deeply about his students and it is important to him that they not only fully understand the material but also cares about each student's individual well-being.

**The instructor seemed enthusiastic about the material that was presented.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] A lot of the research presented was directly related to his upper level studies and research
2. [A] I could tell he loved his job because he taught some of the hardest topics in a way we could understand.
3. [A] most enthusiastic instructor i have had
4. [A] Instructor Mitchell was both very enthusiastic and passionate about Empirical Democratic Theory so much so that his enthusiasm and encouragement has further developed my own personal interest in both Empirical democratic theory and political science in general.

**The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Very engaging
2. [A] The instructor asked many questions that lead to deep discussions that helped further explain the topics.
3. [B] Great lessons with good material, sometimes I thought it could be pretty dry at some points. Maybe more visuals would be good. Just switch up how the material is presented maybe
4. [A] I wholeheartedly agree. Please see my response to the previous question about Instructor Mitchell's enthusiasm.

**The instructor's presentations added to my understanding of the material.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [B] His power point slides could have been better in trying to "decipher" some of the author's theories, but he tried his best in trying to "dumb" it down.
2. [A] Extremely detailed presentations with helpful, indepth breakdowns of the class readings (both required and suggested) that were very helpful for obtaining a better understanding of the material due to the inclusion of background information that was needed for truly grasping the concepts as well as being easy to understand.

**The instructor adequately answered questions from students.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] any simple question that was asked, he would go at length to explain

2. [A] 100%. He would take the time to ask if anyone had any questions, thoughts, comments, or ideas and then he would ask questions to verify what the student was asking, after which, he would answer the question to the best of his ability in easy to understand terms that really helped answer the question well.

**I believe this instructor was an effective teacher.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] He was a great teacher.
2. [A] Cared a lot about the material and also if students learned. Was always patient and took the time to answer questions or make sure students understood.
3. [A] Any institution would be quite fortunate to hire Instructor Mitchell and would be gaining a very talented teacher with a bright future ahead of him. I have been highly recommending his Pols 352 class to my fellow political science students.

**The exams/projects were presented and graded fairly.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] The essays were a good way to apply the theories we learned from class to real world situations.
2. [A] I felt like the assignments given were perfect and fair given the nature of this course. I feel as though essays do a better job at showing our knowledge than if there had been exams.
3. [A] He is an extremely fair grader who clearly presents his expectations and is willing to work with students to better accommodate their ideas and interests for their respective papers if possible. However, I will say that I do wish the maximum page length for the research papers was longer than 5.25 pages.

**Help was readily available for questions and/or homework outside of class.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] He was always available to answer any questions I had. If I could not go to his office hours, he always replied quickly to my emails.
2. [A] He made himself very accessible to us and was glad to chat after class and/ or a different time that would work best for both of us.

**On the whole, this is a good instructor.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] He should be hired by Texas A&M after his Doctorate is complete! Break tradition with him and hire from within!
2. [B] Mr. Mitchell was very helpful and made sure students were updated in a timely manner.
3. [A] I could not agree more. I wish Mr. Mitchell taught other courses here at TAMU.

**I would take another course from this professor.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] If only he taught another class I would definitely take it.
2. [A] see response to #10. I highly recommend Mr. Mitchell's pols 352 class.

**The course was well-organized.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] unit progression made sense

**The course requirements were clear.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] Regardless of other people's opinions, he made all the requirements very clear in the syllabus.
2. [A] This is barely even a complaint, just a small suggestion - In the Syllabus, I think that the way the Grading Policy section is worded is kind of complicated. To elaborate, instead of explaining the points system that is used to determine the grade, I think it would be easier to make a table which allows the student to visualize the grading standards. Super small suggestion, don't know if it's even worth changing!

**The amount of work and/or reading was reasonable for the credit hours received in the course.**

Comments from Students
1. [B] lots of reading
2. [A] He assigned outside readings and four papers that replaced quizzes and tests. Overall his assignments were respectful of our time as students without sacrificing learning.

**On the whole, this was a good course.**

Comments from Students
1. [A] My favorite this semester
2. [A] please see comments on #1-15

## Essay Question Comments

### Essay Questions on the Appraisal

Please add your overall thoughts on the course and instructor.

1. This was one of the most comprehensive classes I've taken in the poli sci department. Each section was structured well, and we came away from the class with a thorough understanding of all the topics. The papers we wrote for the class not only challenged us but added to our understanding of the material and its applicability in academia and in real world politics. Professor Mitchell was also always well prepared, and good at getting us to engage with the material. His enthusiasm about the subject made learning it more fun, and also he was extremely helpful when asked questions. The only downside to this class is that there are no prerequisites. This is my final upper level political science class before my graduation, so I had less trouble with the material than many, but I know that many others in the class had not taken POLS 209, and this class does engage with empirical data (as the name empirical democratic theory suggests). I don't think students or the professor can be faulted for this, however I do think this course should at least require pols 209 as a prerequisite. Overall, though, this was one of my favorite political science classes I've taken, and I would take as many classes with Mitchell as I could
2. The only thing I would offer is to be a little tougher on the grading.
3. He is a great teacher and I wish him luck in his future job and getting his PhD. His future students are lucky to have a great professor.
4. Great professor who makes sure that his students learn the material
5. The instructor for this course did a fantastic job at engaging the class in thoughtful discussions, while simultaneously giving his insight and doing extra research to help the class. I feel that the instructor created a positive environment for all students and truly does their best to help each individual succeed.
6. Professor Mitchell did a great job. Never had any complaints about him, he always worked hard to ensure he was doing a good job presenting the material to the students, and always try to make sure that the students were able to understand what was going on. He clearly has lots of domain knowledge - sometimes he would have to slow down a bit and explain things simply because he knows the complex details of the more simple concepts he taught us.
7. I love him! He is the best :)
8. Instructor Mitchell, thank you so much for a wonderful first semester here at A&M. Your enthusiasm for the material for pols 352 not only encouraged my own interests in democracy, dictatorships, and political science in general, but also inspired me. You have a very bright future ahead of you. Best of luck.





The instructor seemed to care whether the students learned.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
The instructor seemed enthusiastic about the material that was presented.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject.	7	N	5	2	0	0	0	4.71	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.452	
The instructor's presentations added to my understanding of the material.	7	N	5	2	0	0	0	4.71	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.452	
The instructor adequately answered questions from students.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
I believe this instructor was an effective teacher.	7	N	5	2	0	0	0	4.71	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.452	
The exams/projects were presented and graded fairly.	7	N	7	0	0	0	0	5	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.000	
Help was readily available for questions and/or homework outside of class.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
On the whole, this is a good instructor.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
I would take another course from this professor.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
The course was well-organized.	7	N	6	1	0	0	0	4.86	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	85.71	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.350	
The course requirements were clear.	7	N	7	0	0	0	0	5	View
		%	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.000	
The amount of work and/or reading was reasonable for the credit hours received in the course.	7	N	5	2	0	0	0	4.71	<a href="#">View</a>
		%	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.452	
On the whole, this was a good course.	7	N	5	2	0	0	0	4.71	View
		%	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.452	
Overall Mean *Overall Mean score does not include instructor selected items.								4.84	

\* If a link is not active, this represents that no comments were given by students for that item.

## Item Comments

### Items on the Appraisal

**The instructor seemed well prepared for each class.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Always prepared to answer any question on the topic, never any technical difficulties, and always willing to explain concepts in depth so every student could understand.
2. [A] His lecture was well-structured and clearly thought out, with further questions and considerations littered throughout. Highly enjoyed it.

**The instructor seemed to care whether the students learned.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Always willing to answer questions and help in both in class and online classes. Extremely nice and knowledgeable on the subject. He genuinely cares about teaching.
2. [A] Mr. Mitchell is by far the nicest and most understanding instructor I have ever had in political science.
3. [A] He fielded any and all questions patiently and answered them with enough depth.

**The instructor seemed enthusiastic about the material that was presented.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] You can easily tell he is passionate about what he is teaching.

**The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] As previously stated, always willing to answer questions and help students. This class can be hard to grasp due to the material alone. He understood this and was always willing and happy to help. This attitude made the class easier to do and understand.

**The instructor's presentations added to my understanding of the material.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Great slides and presentations. There was never an issue. He came to every class early and ready.

**The instructor adequately answered questions from students.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Willing to answer any question about the topic as well as dive deeper into any subject with the class.
2. [A] He made sure every student understood the concept presented.

**I believe this instructor was an effective teacher.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [B] Great instructor, just needs a bit more confidence in his teaching!
2. [A] Great teacher! Understanding, patient, smart, and passionate about what he does.

**The exams/projects were presented and graded fairly.**

#### Comments from Students

1. [A] Expectations for papers were laid out in the syllabus from day 1 and never had to be revised. Even with the difficulties of moving online, he was understanding of how this may affect our understanding of the material overall.

**Help was readily available for questions and/or homework outside of class.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] Always received emails back within 24 hours.
2. [A] Very fast responder on email

**On the whole, this is a good instructor.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] He should be a professor! He loves what he does and is a great teacher. He would be a great asset to the Bush School.
2. [A] GREAT instructor

**I would take another course from this professor.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] Never had any issues with his teaching. He was on top of everything and willing to help.
2. [A] I would love to

**The course was well-organized.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [A] As previously stated, he came early to every class and had the presentation ready. Everything was always uploaded to ecampus on time in the in class and online version.

**The course requirements were clear.**

**There were no comments for this item.**

**The amount of work and/or reading was reasonable for the credit hours received in the course.**

**Comments from Students**

1. [B] Was difficult to keep up a lot of times with the attention to detail we were expected to have for difficult academic papers, but reasonable.
2. [A] Reasonable amount of reading. If students wanted to read more on the topic he always provided extra articles to help with understanding on ecampus.

**On the whole, this was a good course.**

**There were no comments for this item.**

# Essay Question Comments

## Essay Questions on the Appraisal

Please add your overall thoughts on the course and instructor.

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Great instructor overall. Just need to have more confidence during their presentations! :)  |
| 2. I was hesitant to take this course because it seemed uninteresting. However, the professor made the class very engaging and interesting. He always answered students questions, and was a fair grader. I would recommend this class to my peers.  |
| 3. By far the best instructor I have ever had. Mr. Mitchell will make a fantastic professor one day. I am so thankful to have an instructor who is all about making sure the student understands and is willing to do whatever to make sure we understand the lessons. Thank you for a great semester, I hope everything goes well with your dissertation. Thank you for all you do! - McGowan |

# Empirical Democratic Theory

POLS 352 - Section 501  
Fall 2019

Austin Mitchell  
Office 2039 Allen  
Email: ammittchell@tamu.edu

Class meeting:  
10:55-11:45a MWF Allen 1015

Office hours:  
Wed 3-4p and Fri 9:45-10:45a

This syllabus and course schedule is subject to change by the instructor.  
Updated September 6, 2019.

## Course Description

In POLS 352 we explore how democracies across the world differ from dictatorships, and how they differ among themselves. Why do democracies exist? Do democracies have higher economic performance? Are democracies less likely to have civil conflicts? Does the type of electoral system matter for democratic stability? We will investigate the empirical literature to answer these and other questions.

## Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is for students to gain comprehensive knowledge of democracy across the world. We will explore the theoretical meanings of what a democratic government is, and is not. We will study the existing arguments for and against economic theories of democratization to understand why democracy is a more recent phenomenon in the history of political institutions. We will study why democracy fails and why dictatorships are stable, to contrast our study of democratization. We will also study both the advantages and limitations of democracy.

The secondary goal of this course is to familiarize students with different regimes around the world. Not all democracies are the same. They have different governing and electoral institutions. The same can be said about dictatorships. Dictatorships differ in their types of ruling coalitions and their political institutions.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should expect to be able to:

- Define and describe how political institutions differ between dictatorships and democracies.
- Compare and contrast arguments for why democracies emerge and fail.
- Explain how democracies perform compared to dictatorships.
- Formulate hypotheses about the quality and survival of democracies.

## Expectations

*Attendance and participation:* Attending class is an individual student responsibility. You receive a grade simply for showing up. You will also comprehend the material better if you attend regularly. Students are accountable for the material covered in class whether they are present or not. Students are also expected to participate in class discussions. A good standard is that each student should endeavor to make at least one contribution every class, either by posing a question or making a statement. However, part of participation is being considerate to other students by respecting other students' views and allowing space for others to contribute.

*Notetaking:* Taking notes is also an individual student responsibility. I will make an outline of my lecture available through the eCampus website. This may be helpful as your structure notetaking. It is NOT substitute for attending class and taking your own notes.

*Regularly check university email:* From time to time I will communicate with the class as a whole via email. It is your responsibility to check your university email (@tamu.edu) regularly. The only acceptable email for university communications are from official TAMU accounts. I will only send you email from my tamu.edu account, and I will only respond to student emails from tamu.edu accounts. Keep in mind that an email to your professor/instructor is professional correspondence.

*Reading:* Students are expected to complete the assigned readings for each week before the week's first class. The reading for this class is required; reading is not optional. Plan to set aside time each week to complete the reading. Students are required to understand and apply arguments from the reading material to complete assignments.

*Assignments:* We will have four written assignments this semester. Students must produce their own individual work, and follow university rules against plagiarism. Each written assignment follows a course unit. See Assignments below.

*Examinations:* There are no examinations in this class.

# Assignments

Students are required to write four papers covering topics from each unit in class. Each paper must be turned in by 11a on the day it is due. I accept late papers with a reduction on the grade for the paper of one letter grade per day the paper is late.

The class schedule is divided into four units according to the following schedule:

Unit 1: Overview of democracy (Weeks 1-3)

- Paper 1 due Monday Sept 23, 2019

Unit 2: Explaining democracy (Weeks 4-7)

- Paper 2 due Monday Oct 21, 2019

Unit 3: Democratic backsliding and dictatorship (Weeks 8-10)

- Paper 3 due Monday Nov 11, 2019

Unit 4: Advantages and limitations of democracy (Weeks 11-15)

- Paper 4 due Friday Dec 6, 2019

## Paper 1: Describe a case

In this paper, you will pick one country (except the USA) that will be the basis of a descriptive analysis. The country you choose may be either a dictatorship or a democracy. The paper must be 5 pages (4.75 pages minimum and 5.25 pages maximum), double spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. The paper must include data from at least 5 different sources. Also, include a title page with your name, a paper title, our course number, and the date.

The paper will detail three aspect of a regime:

1. The history the country's government.
2. The political institutions of the country's regime.
3. The performance of the country's regime.

The history of the country's government entails all political development and regime changes that led to the country's current regime. This means if you choose a democracy that was previously a dictatorship then you must also describe the regime when it was a dictatorship, as well as the process of democratization. Information should include regime type classifications. For example, dictatorships may be military, monarchy, etc. Democracies may be presidential or parliamentary. Descriptions of regime changes should also account for important political events and the interests represented in the regime and the opposition (for example labor protests against a regime supported by industry).

The political institutions should account for characteristics of the regime beyond the regime type. For example, dictatorships may have no legislatures, unelected legislatures, single-party legislatures, or multi-party legislatures. Dictatorships may or may not have independent courts or free rather than government-run press. Democracies have various electoral

laws such as single versus multi-member districts, as well as other political institutions.

The country's performance includes economic, social, and health performance. These characteristics help describe how well the government provides for its citizens. Economic performance may include economic growth, level of development, inflation, tax rates, foreign investment, etc. Social performance may include employment rates, poverty rates, and education rates, etc. Health factors include fertility rates, infant mortality rates, and disease rates among others. Other indicators may reflect citizen's orientation to the regime, such as level of repression or government killings, voting rates, or government feeling indicators.

Paper 1 is entirely descriptive. There should be no theoretical analysis. That means that you should not attempt to explain *why* a regime transitioned from a dictatorship to a democracy, or vice versa. You should also not provide a justification for *why* the government performance as well or as poorly as it does. These issues are for later papers.

Since this paper is an exercise in description, empirical evidence will be important to include in your paper. Citing statistics is useful (such as a statistic from within an existing journal article), but obtaining and referencing indicators from cross-national datasets is better. Large datasets have the advantage of enabling a comparative perspective, as well as systematic definitions for their indicators.

## **Paper 2: Explain a transition to democracy**

In Paper 2, you will pick a case of a transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, and apply a theory we covered in class or your own to explain the transition. You may select any case, but ideally you will select a case that is the same country from your Paper 1 because you have already gathered information about the regime.

The paper must be 5 pages (4.75 pages minimum and 5.25 pages maximum), double spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. The paper must include citations from at least 5 sources beyond the papers and books we cover in class. Also, include a title page with your name, a paper title, our course number, and the date.

In your theoretical evaluation, you should discuss multiple theories that we cover in class. Your discussion should assess 1) the internal and 2) the external validity of the theories we discussed. Whether you think the theory is internally valid means whether or not you find it logical and convincing. Whether you think the theory is externally valid is based on your case study, meaning does the theory explain the data or not.

You may also attempt to construct your own argument to explain democratization. Your paper must discuss existing theories from class, and your paper does not have to attempt

to create a new explanation. But, I encourage attempts at novel theory-building. Your theory should explain the case, but should also be generalizable beyond just the case that you analyze.

### **Paper 3: Explain an authoritarian regime**

In Paper 3 you will explain either an existing stable dictatorship or a transition from democracy to dictatorship. The case you choose for this paper may be different than from your cases in Papers 1 and 2. But, it is completely acceptable to select a country with a history of both democratization and backsliding so that you may write Papers 1, 2 and 3 on the same country.

The paper must be 5 pages (4.75 pages minimum and 5.25 pages maximum), double spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. The paper must include citations from at least 5 sources beyond the papers and books we cover in class. Also, include a title page with your name, a paper title, our course number, and the date.

Just as Paper 2 was theoretically explaining democratization, this paper theoretically explains stable dictatorship or democratic backsliding. You must clearly state which type of case you are explaining. You must discuss the theories that we cover in class for both internal validity and whether the theories apply to your case. You are also allowed to attempt a novel theory, but you are required to also discuss our theories from class.

### **Paper 4: Explain a government's performance**

The fourth and final paper for this class will explain the performance of a particular regime. You must pick a case to explain, which may be a democracy or a dictatorship. Ideally you will use the same case as Paper 1 since you have already obtained evidence of performance, but this is not necessary. You may pick a case regardless of your cases in previous assignments.

The paper must be 5 pages (4.75 pages minimum and 5.25 pages maximum), double spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. The paper must include citations from at least 5 sources beyond the papers and books we cover in class. Also, include a title page with your name, a paper title, our course number, and the date.

To provide context of the performance of your case, you must include comparative evidence of the performance of your regime. This should involve citing statistics from within the datasets that you downloaded previously. You must select a few other countries for your comparison. The comparative evidence may, but need not, include global coverage. You should select cases carefully to control for factors that allow a clearer comparison. For example, selecting countries with similar GDPs would control for differences due to

economic development.

The paper must explain the performance of your case using arguments that we covered in class about how political institutions determine policy outcomes. The performance outcomes should cover multiple dimensions. Select at minimum one economic, one social, and one health indicator to explain. That is a minimum of three total indicators. The arguments that you apply should clearly explain why the political institutions in your case determine the specific performance outcomes. You do not need to explain all of your comparative cases. You are only required to (and should only) explain your chosen case.

## Grading Policy

Grades in this class are comprised of assignments and class participation. 80% of all possible points come from assignments with the remaining 20% from class attendance and participation. Grades are assigned according to the following scale:

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A	$\geq 90\%$
B	$\geq 80\%$ and $< 90\%$
C	$\geq 70\%$ and $< 80\%$
D	$\geq 60\%$ and $< 70\%$
F	$\geq 50\%$ and $< 60\%$

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Assignments are worth 50 points each. Class attendance and participation is worth a total of 50 points. Class participation requires daily attendance and contributing to class discussion. Each student should endeavor to make one statement or ask one question in every class. We have 45 classes in the year. Attendance is worth one point each class. Regularly contributing to class discussion is worth 5 points for the semester.

## Electronic Devices Policy

The principal governing my policy on electronic devices and their usage in the classroom is that they must enhance your learning, not distract from it. They must also not disrupt the learning of others around you. If you wish, you may take notes on laptops and/or tablets instead of with pen and paper. That said, typing your notes is *not* an excuse or an invitation to check social media, respond to texts, or online chatting. I reserve the right to significantly alter this policy if electronic devices become a disruption. *If you cannot stay focused while taking notes on your laptop, then use a pen and paper!*

## **Copyright Statement**

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include, but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I grant permission.

## **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 845-1637.

## **Inclusivity Statement**

The Department of Political Science supports the Texas A&M University commitment to inclusion, and welcomes individuals from any racial, ethnic, religious, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, and nationality. See <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>. In the spirit of this vital commitment, in this course each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute to all discussions. Everyone is expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by fellow students and the instructor, and will engage in reasoned discussion that refrains from derogatory comments about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

We WILL discuss political issues in this class. I will bring evidence, theory, and scholarship to bear on political topics (some of which are controversial). I encourage questions and discussion. You are not required to agree with whatever you believe my point of view to be. You are required to treat myself and your classmates with civility and respect in both word and actions.

## Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, and Cheating

*“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”*

Students are bound by the Aggie Honor Code. Additionally, students should be aware that academic dishonesty involves acts other than plagiarism. “As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another.” In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>) or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

Additionally, the honor code forbids Cheating which is defined as “Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise. Unauthorized materials may include anything or anyone that gives a student assistance and has not been specifically approved in advance by the instructor.” The Honor Code also forbids Complicity, defined as “Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to commit an act of academic dishonesty” meaning if you allow someone to copy from your assignment or plagiarize then you are deemed complicit. A full list, including examples, of academic misconduct can be found at: <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Rules-and-Procedures/Rules/Honor-System-Rules>.

Students cheating on an assignment or complicit with cheating will receive a zero on the assignment and will be referred to the Aggie Honor Office.

# Unit 1 Overview of democracy

## Week 1 - What is democracy?

Aug 26: Overview

- Course syllabus

Aug 28: Limitations

- Clark, W.R., Golder, M. and Golder, S.N., 2017. *Principles of comparative politics*. CQ Press. Ch 10 pp 355-363 and 379-386.
- *Recommended:* Gamm, G. and Shepsle, K., 1989. Emergence of legislative institutions: Standing committees in the House and Senate, 1810-1825. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, pp.39-66.

No class August 30

## Week 2 - Institutions of democracy

Sept 2: Elections

- Cheibub, José Antonio and Adam Przeworski, 1999. Democracy, elections, and accountability for economic outcomes. *Democracy, accountability, and representation*. Chapter 2, pp 222-250. Edited by Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes and Bernard Manin. Cambridge University Press.

Sept 4: Rule of law

- Weingast, B.R., 1997. The political foundations of democracy and the rule of the law. *American political science review*, 91(2), pp.245-263.

Sept 6: Media

- Adena, M., Enikolopov, R., Petrova, M., Santarosa, V. and Zhuravskaya, E., 2015. Radio and the Rise of the Nazis in Prewar Germany. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 130(4), pp.1885-1939.

## Week 3 - Measuring democracy

### Sept 9: Datasets

- Polity IV  
<http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
- Dictatorship and Democracy  
<https://sites.google.com/site/joseantoniocheibub/datasets/democracy-and-dictatorship-revisited>
- V-Dem  
<http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
- Vanhenen  
<https://www.prio.org/Data/Governance/Vanhanens-index-of-democracy/>
- Freedom House  
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018>

### Sept 11: Polyarchy

- Dahl, R.A., 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and opposition*. Yale University Press. pp 1-16.
- *Recommended:* Coppedge, M., Alvarez, A. and Maldonado, C., 2008. *Two persistent dimensions of democracy: Contestation and inclusiveness*. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(3), pp.632-647.

### Sept 13: Regime types

- Diamond, Larry, 2002. Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of democracy*, 13(2), pp.21-35.

## Unit 2 Explaining democracy

### Week 4 - Origins of democracy

#### Sept 16: Aristotle

- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-politics/>

#### Sept 18: Emergence in Europe

- Stasavage, D., 2016. Representation and consent: why they arose in Europe and not elsewhere. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, pp.145-162.

#### Sept 20: Colonial institutions

- Sokoloff, K.L. and Engerman, S.L., 2000. Institutions, factor endowments, and paths of development in the new world. *Journal of Economic perspectives*, 14(3), pp.217-232.
- *Recommended:* Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S. and Robinson, J.A., 2001. The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American economic*

review, 91(5), pp.1369-1401.

## **Week 5 - Economic theories of democracy I: Economic development**

Sept 23: Arguments

- Przeworski, A. and Limongi, F., 1997. Modernization: Theories and facts. *World politics*, 49(2), pp.155-183.
- *Recommended:* Lipset, S.M., 1959. Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American political science review*, 53(1), pp.69-105.
- **Paper 1 due**

Sept 25: Evidence

- Epstein, D.L., Bates, R., Goldstone, J., Kristensen, I. and O'Halloran, S., 2006. Democratic transitions. *American journal of political science*, 50(3), pp.551-569.
- *Recommended:* Boix, C. and Stokes, S.C., 2003. Endogenous democratization. *World politics*, 55(4), pp.517-549.

Sept 27: Criticisms

- Cheibub, J.A., Gandhi, J. and Vreeland, J.R., 2010. Democracy and dictatorship revisited. *Public choice*, 143(1-2), pp.67-101.
- *Recommended:* Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., Robinson, J.A. and Yared, P., 2008. Income and democracy. *American Economic Review*, 98(3), pp.808-42.

## **Week 6 - Economic theories of democracy II: Economic structure**

Sept 30: Labor

- Rueschemeyer, D., Stephens, E.H. and Stephens, J.D., 1992. *Capitalist development and democracy* (Vol. 22). Polity: Cambridge. 1992 pp 269-281
- *Recommended:* Przeworski, A., 2009. Conquered or granted? A history of suffrage extensions. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(2), pp.291-321.

Oct 2: Capital development

- Boix, C., 2003. *Democracy and redistribution*. Cambridge University Press. pp 10-13, 36-41
- *Recommended:* Bates, R.H. and Donald Lien, D.H., 1985. A note on taxation, development, and representative government. *Politics & Society*, 14(1), pp.53-70.

Oct 4: Diffusion (non-economic)

- Gleditsch, K.S. and Ward, M.D., 2006. Diffusion and the international context of democratization. *International organization*, 60(4), pp.911-933.

## **Week 7 - Cultural theories of democracy**

### Oct 7: Cultural arguments

- Inglehart, R. and Welzel, C., 2005. Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence. Cambridge University Press. pp 22-47.
- *Recommended:* Teorell, J. and Hadenius, A., 2006. Democracy without democratic values: A rejoinder to Welzel and Inglehart. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 41(3), pp.95-111.

### Oct 9: Criticisms

- Huntington, S.P., 1991. Democracy's third wave. *Journal of democracy*, 2(2), pp.12-34.
- *Recommended:* Seligson, M.A., 2002. The renaissance of political culture or the renaissance of the ecological fallacy?. *Comparative Politics*, pp.273-292.

### Oct 11: Alternative explanations

- Lust, E., 2011. Missing the third wave: Islam, institutions, and democracy in the Middle East. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 46(2), pp.163-190.
- *Recommended:* Fish, M.S., 2002. Islam and authoritarianism. *World politics*, 55(1), pp.4-37.
- *Recommended:* Muller, E.N. and Seligson, M.A., 1994. Civic culture and democracy: the question of causal relationships. *American political science review*, 88(3), pp.635-652.

## **Unit 3 Democratic backsliding and dictatorship**

### **Week 8 - Explaining democracy survival and failure**

#### Oct 14: Consolidation

- Svobik, M., 2008. Authoritarian reversals and democratic consolidation. *American Political Science Review*, 102(2), pp.153-168.
- *Recommended:* Svobik, M.W., 2015. Which democracies will last? Coups, incumbent takeovers, and the dynamic of democratic consolidation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), pp.715-738.

#### Oct 16: Inequality

- Houle, C., 2009. Inequality and democracy: Why inequality harms consolidation but does not affect democratization. *World politics*, 61(4), pp.589-622.

- *Recommended:* Haggard, S. and Kaufman, R.R., 2012. Inequality and regime change: Democratic transitions and the stability of democratic rule. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), pp.495-516.

Oct 18: Elites

- Wright, J. and Escribà-Folch, A., 2012. Authoritarian institutions and regime survival: Transitions to democracy and subsequent autocracy. *British Journal of Political Science*, 42(2), pp.283-309.
- *Recommended:* Albertus, M. and Menaldo, V., 2014. Gaming democracy: elite dominance during transition and the prospects for redistribution. *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(3), pp.575-603.

## **Week 9 - Democratic erosion**

Oct 21: Backsliding

- Bermeo, N., 2016. On democratic backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), pp.5-19.
- **Paper 2 due**

Oct 23: Electoral fraud

- Lehoucq, F., 2003. Electoral fraud: Causes, types, and consequences. *Annual review of political science*, 6(1), pp.233-256.

Oct 25: Polarization

- Graham, Matthew and Milan Svobik. 2019. Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States. (March 2019 unpublished version).

## **Week 10 - Economic theories of dictatorship**

Oct 28: Resource curse

- Ross, M.L., 2015. What have we learned about the resource curse?. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18, pp.239-259.

Oct 30: Institution building

- Wright, J., 2008. Do authoritarian institutions constrain? How legislatures affect economic growth and investment. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2), pp.322-343.
- *Recommended:* Mitchell, Austin. 2019. Fiscal Conditions for Elections in Dictatorships.

Nov 1: Liberalization:

- Pond, Amy., 2018. Financial liberalization: Stable autocracies and constrained democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 51(1), pp.105-135.
- *Recommended:* Pond, Amy., 2017. Economic sanctions and demand for protection. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(5), pp.1073-1094.

## Unit 4 Advantages and limitations for democracy

### Week 11 - Democratic advantage

Nov 4: Finance

- Schultz, K.A. and Weingast, B.R., 2003. The democratic advantage: institutional foundations of financial power in international competition. *International Organization*, 57(1), pp.3-42.
- *Recommended:* North, D.C. and Weingast, B.R., 1989. Constitutions and commitment: the evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth-century England. *The journal of economic history*, 49(4), pp.803-832.

Nov 6: Growth and investment

- Doucouliagos, H. and Ulubaşoğlu, M.A., 2008. Democracy and economic growth: a meta-analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1), pp.61-83.
- *Recommended:* Li, Q., Owen, E. and Mitchell, A., 2018. Why Do Democracies Attract More or Less Foreign Direct Investment? A Metaregression Analysis. *International Studies Quarterly*, 62(3), pp.494-504.

Nov 8: Conflict

- Hegre, H., 2014. Democracy and armed conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(2), pp.159-172.

### Week 12 - Limitations of democracy I: Representation

Nov 11: Electoral choice

- Cox, G.W., 1994. Strategic voting equilibria under the single nontransferable vote. *American Political Science Review*, 88(3), pp.608-621.
- **Paper 3 due**

Nov 13: Representation

- Powell Jr, G.B. and Vanberg, G.S., 2000. Election laws, disproportionality and median correspondence: Implications for two visions of democracy. *British Journal of Political Science*, 30(3), pp.383-411.

- *Recommended:* Carey, J.M. and Hix, S., 2011. The electoral sweet spot: Low-magnitude proportional electoral systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2), pp.383-397.

Nov 15: Agency independence

- Clark, W.R. and Arel-Bundock, V., 2013. Independent but not indifferent: Partisan bias in monetary policy at the Fed. *Economics & Politics*, 25(1), pp.1-26.

Nov 15 last day for Q-drop without penalty

## **Week 13 - Limitations of democracy II: Strategic incentives**

Nov 18: Political budget cycles

- Alt, J.E. and Lassen, D.D., 2006. Transparency, political polarization, and political budget cycles in OECD countries. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), pp.530-550.

Nov 20: Pork

- Hirano, S., 2006. Electoral institutions, hometowns, and favored minorities: Evidence from Japanese electoral reforms. *World Politics*, 59(1), pp.51-82.
- *Recommended:* Linzer, D.A. and Rogowski, R.L., 2008. Lower prices: The impact of majoritarian systems in democracies around the world. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(1), pp.17-27.

Nov 22: Pork and political budget cycles

- Brollo, F. and Nannicini, T., 2012. Tying your enemy's hands in close races: the politics of federal transfers in Brazil. *American Political Science Review*, 106(4), pp.742-761.

## **Week 14 - Limitations to democracy III: Ethnicity and opportunism**

Nov 25: Political salience

- Posner, D.N., 2004. The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4), pp.529-545.
- *Recommended:* Ichino, N. and Nathan, N.L., 2013. Crossing the line: Local ethnic geography and voting in Ghana. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), pp.344-361.

No classes: Nov 27 and Nov 29

## **Week 15 - Limitations to democracy III: Ethnicity and opportunism**

Dec 2: Institutions

- Elkins, Z. and Sides, J., 2007. Can institutions build unity in multiethnic states?. *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), pp.693-708.

Dec 4: Ethnic voting

- Huber, J.D., 2012. Measuring ethnic voting: Do proportional electoral laws politicize ethnicity?. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(4), pp.986-1001.

Dec 6: No class

- **Paper 4 due**

Dec 13 degree-earner grades due

Dec 16 final grades due