

POL 377H1F

Topics in Comparative Politics I

The Making of Modern Democracy: From the Middle Ages to the European Union

TIME: Monday, 2:00–4:00 PM

LOCATION: Bissell 313

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Brendan McElroy, Assistant Professor, Political Science

OFFICE HOURS: Friday, 12:30–3:00 PM, Sidney Smith 6026A (no sign-up required)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines political change in Central and Eastern Europe from the Middle Ages to the present day. For our purposes, Central and Eastern Europe encompasses Germany, Austria, the Czech lands, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland; we shall devote more limited attention to Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. Although this course is not a general survey of modern European history, one of its ambitions is to question the idea of a divergence between “West” and “East” before 1945. Consequently, we shall at times venture outside the region defined above to identify comparable and contrasting West European developments.

How are democracies created and why do they collapse? We shall approach this question from an historical perspective, considering in succession the multiple “layers” of historical legacies – old regime, nineteenth century, interwar period, state socialist – each in relation to the region’s present-day politics. Throughout, the course will introduce students to a variety of historical explanations for present-day political phenomena (especially democratization and democratic breakdown) as well as accounts centered on more proximate causes, such as leadership and strategic interaction-based explanations. Moreover, as we uncover the foundations of political regimes, we will address a variety of related questions: what is the relationship between democracy and capitalism? Is democracy possible only within the framework of the sovereign state? What causes revolutions? Why did early modern European states take on such diverse forms, and what was the impact of these variations on subsequent trajectories of democratization and economic development?

There are no textbooks for this course. Readings will be posted to Quercus; additionally, many of the journal articles can be accessed through the U of T library system. For access to e-books see: <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/lib/utoronto/home.action>.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- Evaluate competing – and complementary – explanations for democratization and democratic breakdown.
- Identify historical legacies from different eras (old regime, nineteenth century, interwar period, state socialist) and understand their impact on present-day Central and East European politics.
- Articulate and mobilize historical evidence to argue your own position *vis-à-vis* questions such as:
 - Are capitalism and democracy natural partners, or is the more-or-less happy marriage of the two during the postwar “Golden Age” (ca. 1945–73) an historical anomaly, unlikely to be repeated?
 - Why and how did states form in medieval and early modern Europe? Is state-building tantamount to the creation of a centralized, hierarchical bureaucracy, or did other processes – religious polarization, the transformation of elite social structures, “social disciplining” – make an equal if not greater contribution?
 - To what extent can we speak of a fundamental divergence of Western and Eastern Europe before the imposition of state socialism? If so, what, exactly, diverged – political orders, agrarian social structures, cultures – and when? Is there any place for the concept of Central Europe within this dichotomy?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation (10%) means, first and foremost, attendance and active engagement with the weekly lectures. Read carefully and arrive with questions to ask or your own interpretations of the course material to present. Be prepared to answer the instructor’s questions. If you neither speak up in class nor attend office hours, I can only guess your level of engagement with the material. If you are absent from lecture, by definition you are not participating.

Weekly quizzes (20%) on the content of the readings and lectures will be posted to Quercus beginning September 19. There will be no quiz during Thanksgiving week or the fall reading week; separate quizzes will be posted for the December 5 and 8 lectures. **Quizzes will post on the Quercus site after each lecture and must be completed within 24 hours. Each quiz will consist of three multiple-choice questions. Once the quiz is opened, you will have 15 minutes to complete it.** Correct answers will not be revealed immediately upon submission, but I will discuss the results in the following lecture. Quizzes are open book, but students must complete them individually, not in collaboration with others.

Each of the two **response papers (20% each)** will ask you to answer a question at length (1,500–1,800 words) with the help of the course readings, lectures, and in-class discussion. The first response paper will be assigned on October 17 and is due at 11:00 AM on October 24; the second will be assigned on November 21 and is due at 11:00 AM on November 28. I will provide more detailed instructions about each response paper as the assignment date approaches. Response papers should be submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with the word count indicated near the top of the first page.

The **final exam (30%)** will cover material from the entire course. The exam will consist of two parts: (1) a selection of key terms and concepts to identify and (2) a longer response essay. Students

will have two hours to complete the exam. I will provide more detailed instructions as the exam date approaches.

WEEKS AT A GLANCE

Week	Date	Topic	Notes
1	September 12	Europe - Eastern, Western, Central?	
2	September 19	What is the state? What is democracy?	First weekly reading quiz
3	September 26	Medieval legacies	
4	October 3	Absolutism?	
5	October 10	Thanksgiving Day	No lecture
6	October 17	Revolutions - political, agricultural, industrial	
7	October 24	Nineteenth-century democratization	First response paper due by 11:00 AM
8	October 31	Socialism, nationalism, and empire	
9	November 7	Fall reading week	No lecture
10	November 14	Interwar Europe	
11	November 21	Welfare states - capitalist and socialist	
12	November 28	Postwar politics - consensus and conflict	Second response paper due by 11:00 AM
13	December 5	Transformations of capitalism	
14	December 8	Contemporary challenges to democracy	Make-up day (for Thanksgiving Monday)

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

1. EUROPE - EASTERN, WESTERN, CENTRAL? (SEPTEMBER 12)

Required readings:

- Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), introduction and ch. 1, pp. 1-49.

2. WHAT IS THE STATE? WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? (SEPTEMBER 19)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy Is... and Is Not,” *Journal of Democracy* 2.3 (1991), pp. 75–88.
- Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, eds., *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis and Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), pp. 32–76 (read up to the second paragraph on p. 76).
- Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 5, pp. 169–191.
- Robert von Friedeburg and John Morrill, “Introduction” in von Friedeburg and Morrill, eds., *Monarchy Transformed: Princes and Their Elites in Early Modern Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), ch. 1, pp. 1–9 (read up to the second paragraph on p. 9).

3. MEDIEVAL LEGACIES (SEPTEMBER 26)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Brian M. Downing, “Medieval Origins of Constitutional Government in the West,” *Theory and Society* 18.2 (1989), pp. 213–247.
- Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire: From Maximilian I to the Peace of Westphalia 1493–1648* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), introduction and ch. 1–2, pp. 1–39.
- Chris Wickham, *Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), ch. 1, 8–9, 11; pp. 1–21, 141–185, 211–234.

4. ABSOLUTISM? (OCTOBER 3)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), ch. 4, pp. 60–85.
- Nicholas Henshall, “Early Modern Absolutism, 1550–1700: Political Reality or Propaganda?” in Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Duchhardt, eds., *Der Absolutismus – ein Mythos? Strukturwandel monarchischer Herrschaft in West- und Mitteleuropa (ca. 1550–1700)* [Absolutism – A Myth? The Structural Transformation of Monarchy in Western and Central Europe, ca. 1550–1700] (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau-Verlag, 1996), pp. 25–56.

- Robert Frost, “Monarchy in Northern and Eastern Europe” in Hamish Scott, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350–1750: Cultures and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ch. 15, pp. 385–417.
- Hamish Scott, “Dynastic Monarchy and the Consolidation of Aristocracy during Europe’s Long Seventeenth Century” in von Friedeburg and Morrill, eds., *Monarchy Transformed* (see week 2), ch. 3, pp. 44–86.

5. THANKSGIVING DAY (OCTOBER 10)

Review lecture notes from previous week.

6. REVOLUTIONS – POLITICAL, AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL (OCTOBER 17)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), ch. 7–8, pp. 413–452.
- Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 [1944]), ch. 3–8, pp. 35–107.
- Peter H. Wilson, *Heart of Europe: A History of the Holy Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), ch. 12, pp. 636–654 (start from the section “The Rule of Law”).

7. NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEMOCRATIZATION (OCTOBER 24)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Sheri Berman, “Modernization in Historical Perspective: The Case of Imperial Germany,” *World Politics* 53.3 (2001), pp. 431–462.
- Kurt Weyland, “The Diffusion of Regime Contention in European Democratization, 1830–1940,” *Comparative Political Studies* 43.8–9 (2010), pp. 1148–1176.
- Kurt Weyland, “Diffusion Waves in European Democratization: The Impact of Organizational Development,” *Comparative Politics* 45.1 (2012), pp. 25–45.
- Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), ch. 7, pp. 215–258.

8. SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND EMPIRE (OCTOBER 31)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Torben Iversen and David Soskice, *Democracy and Prosperity: Reinventing Capitalism through a Turbulent Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), ch. 1–2, pp. 1–101.

- Marc Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), ch. 2, pp. 41–75.
- Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 1, pp. 7–46.

Recommended reading: August H. Nimtz, “Marx and Engels’s Electoral Strategy: The Alleged versus the Real,” *New Political Science* 32.3 (2010), pp. 367–387.

9. FALL READING WEEK (NOVEMBER 7)

Review lecture notes from previous week.

10. INTERWAR EUROPE (NOVEMBER 14)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Nancy G. Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), ch. 2, pp. 21–63.
- Giovanni Capoccia, “Defending Democracy: Reactions to Political Extremism in Interwar Europe,” *European Journal of Political Research* 39.4 (2001), pp. 431–460.
- Gregory M. Luebbert, “Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Europe,” *World Politics* 39.4 (1987), pp. 449–478.
- Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties* (see week 7), ch. 8–9, pp. 259–333.

11. WELFARE STATES – CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST (NOVEMBER 21)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Barry Eichengreen, “Institutions and Economic Growth: Europe after World War II,” in Nicholas Crafts and Gianni Toniolo, eds., *Economic Growth in Europe after 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ch. 2, pp. 38–72.
- Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), ch. 1–2, pp. 9–54.
- Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *Development, Democracy, and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), introduction (except for the “Some Methodological Issues” section) and ch. 4, pp. 1–17, 21–24, 143–178.

12. POSTWAR POLITICS – CONSENSUS AND CONFLICT (NOVEMBER 28)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Ronald F. Inglehart, *Cultural Evolution: People’s Motivations Are Changing, and Reshaping the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), ch. 1–2, pp. 8–35.
- Iversen and Soskice, *Democracy and Prosperity* (see week 8), ch. 3; pp. 102–135.
- Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments,” in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), ch. 9, pp. 91–138.
- Mazower, *Dark Continent* (see week 8), ch. 8, pp. 250–285.

13. TRANSFORMATIONS OF CAPITALISM (DECEMBER 5)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, “An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism,” in Hall and Soskice, eds., *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), ch. 1, pp. 1–66.
- Iversen and Soskice, *Democracy and Prosperity* (see week 8), ch. 4; pp. 136–215.
- Wolfgang Streeck, “How Will Capitalism End?,” *New Left Review* 87 (May–June 2014), pp. 35–64; available here: <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii87/articles/wolfgang-streeck-how-will-capitalism-end>.
- Kathleen Thelen, “Varieties of Capitalism: Trajectories of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012), pp. 137–159.

14. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY (DECEMBER 8)

Required readings:

- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- J. Lawrence Broz, Jeffrey Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth, “Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash,” *International Organization* 75.2 (2021), pp. 464–494.
- Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, “Understanding the Global Patrimonial Wave,” *Perspectives on Politics* 20.1 (2022), pp. 237–249.
- Inglehart, *Cultural Evolution* (see week 12), ch. 9, pp. 173–199.
- Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), ch. 8, pp. 284–305.
- R. Daniel Kelemen, “The European Union’s Authoritarian Equilibrium,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 27.3 (2020), pp. 481–499.

COURSE POLICIES

OFFICE HOURS: No appointment is needed for regular office hours. If you cannot make my regular office hours due to a scheduling conflict but would like to meet, email me to set up an appointment.

EMAIL: Consult the syllabus, Quercus site, and other course documentation before contacting me with questions. Email correspondence should be reserved for organizational questions; substantive questions about the course material are best addressed to me in lecture or office hours.

KEEP COPIES: Keep paper drafts and hard copies of all writing assignments until the graded versions are returned.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly. For further information and clarification, examine the University of Toronto's policies on plagiarism (<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>). This course uses anti-plagiarism software.

ANTI-PLAGIARISM SOFTWARE: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

EXTENSIONS: Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances. I will only consider requests for extensions made during office hours, not those submitted by email. I will not consider requests made less than two weeks before the assignment due date unless the student can present an official Verification of Student Illness or Injury (<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>).

LATE AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS: Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 10% (of total marks for the assignment) per day. This includes weekends. In other words, a response paper submitted the day after the deadline *cannot* receive a grade higher than 90%; a paper submitted two days after the deadline *cannot* receive a grade higher than 80%, and so on. Papers submitted five or more calendar days after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, as will any work handed in after the assignment in question has been returned to the class. I will not make accommodations for late registration in the course.

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, feel free to approach me and Accessibility Services (<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/contact-us>) as soon as possible. You must contact Accessibility Services before 5:00 PM on Friday, October 14, to request accommodations for the final exam period. I cannot grant accommodations after this deadline.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As an instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behavior that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the U of T Equity and Diversity officer.