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)  
EMAIL: b.mcelroy@utoronto.ca

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:
  o 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?
  o 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?
  o 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

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

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

1. **Europe – Eastern, Western, Central? (September 12)**

   Required readings:
   
2. **WHAT IS THE STATE? WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? (SEPTEMBER 19)**

**Required readings:**

- Review lecture notes from previous week.

3. **MEDIEVAL LEGACIES (SEPTEMBER 26)**

**Required readings:**

- Review lecture notes from previous week.

4. **ABSOLUTISM? (OCTOBER 3)**

**Required readings:**

- Review lecture notes from previous week.

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.

7. NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEMOCRATIZATION (OCTOBER 24)
Required readings:
- Review lecture notes from previous week.

8. SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND EMPIRE (OCTOBER 31)
Required readings:
- Review lecture notes from previous week.


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

Required readings:
- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Iversen and Soskice, Democracy and Prosperity (see week 8), ch. 3; pp. 102–135.
- 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.
- Iversen and Soskice, Democracy and Prosperity (see week 8), ch. 4; pp. 136–215.

14. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY (DECEMBER 8)

Required readings:
- Review lecture notes from previous week.
- Inglehart, Cultural Evolution (see week 12), ch. 9, pp. 173–199.
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.