

Course information 2025-26

PS3086 Democracy and Democratisation

General information

MODULE LEVEL: 6

CREDIT: 30

NOTIONAL STUDY TIME: 300 hours

MODE: Locally Taught and Independent Learner Route Only

Summary

This course considers various aspects of the conditions of democracy, the processes of democratisation, and the breakdown of democratic regimes.

Conditions

Please see Programme Regulations for a list of Prerequisites, Corequisites and Exclusions.

Aims and objectives

The study of democracy and democratisation has three main aims. These are to consider:

- how democracy is defined and understood, and how far actual systems conform to democratic principles
- the main explanations of why political systems have moved from non-democracy to democracy
- whether or not democracy is a stable political system, and whether democratic systems run any serious risk of breakdown.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to discuss critically a range of issues relating to democratisation. Students should be able to:

- explain how democracy actually works in real world conditions
- explain how democracy relates to the non-elective institutions of the state
- discuss different ways in which democracy can work badly
- outline the essential arguments of comparative historical sociologists of democratisation, such as Moore and Rueschemeyer
- explain how some forms of non-democracy can make the transition to democracy
- assess theories of democratic breakdown in relatively poor countries and arguments for developmental dictatorship
- discuss why democracy has survived in wealthy countries.

Employability skills

Below are the three most relevant employability skills that students acquire by undertaking this course which can be conveyed to future prospective employers:

1. Persuasion and negotiation
2. Decision making
3. Communication

Essential reading

For full details please refer to the reading list.

Books

Dahl, R.A. *Democracy and its Critics*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) [ISBN 9780300049381]

Fukuyama, F. *The End of History and the Last Man*. (London: Penguin, 2012) [ISBN 9780241960240]

Galbraith, J.K. *The Culture of Contentment*. (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992) [ISBN 9781856191470]

Held, D. *Models of Democracy*. (Cambridge: Polity, 2006) third edition [ISBN 9780804754729].

Linz, J. and A. Stepan *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) [ISBN 9780801851582]

Lipset, S.M. *Political Man: the Social Bases of politics*. (London: Heinemann, 1983) [ISBN 9780801825224].

Moore, B. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. (London: Penguin, 1967) [ISBN 9780807050750].

Przeworski, A. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) [ISBN 978052142339]

Rueschemeyer, D., E. Stephens and J. Stephens *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. (University of Chicago Press with Polity Press, 1992) [ISBN 9780226731445]

Schumpeter, J. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. (London: Allen and Unwin, 2010) [ISBN 9780415567893]

Whitehead, L. *Democratization: Theory and Experience*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) [ISBN 9780199253289]

Journals available online

Carsten, Q. and Philippe C. Schmitter 'Liberalization, transition and consolidation: measuring the components of democratization', *Democratization*, 11(5) 2004, pp.59-90.

Huntington, Samuel P. 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 93, 72(3) 1993, pp.22-49.

O'Donnell, G. 'Delegative Democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, 5(1) 1994, pp.55-69. Available online at <http://www.nd.edu/~kellogg/publications/workingpapers/WPS/172.pdf>

Zakaria, F. 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6) 1997, pp.22-43.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour and fifteen-minute closed-book written examination.

Syllabus

This course considers various aspects of the conditions of democracy, the processes of democratisation, and the breakdown of democratic regimes.

Conceptualising democracy. General criteria for democracy, and particular forms of semidemocracy. Delegative democracy, illiberal democracy and biased states. Democratic consolidation.

Process of democratisation. Paths to democracy. Comparative historical studies.

Conditions of Democracy and its maintenance. The concept of democratic legitimacy and the functioning of liberal democracy in advanced capitalist societies.

Transitions to Democracy. Forms of non-democracy and transitional paths towards democratisation.

Democratic breakdown and reconstruction. Mass society theories and theories of class conflict. Modernisation theory and later criticisms. Democracy and war. Democratic reconstruction and its problems.

A range of countries will be examined in relation to these themes from Europe, Asia and Latin America.