

Political Science 2299F (550) – Fall 2022
Huron University College
Contemporary Challenges to Democracy

Lecture: Tuesdays 8:30-10:30 AM
Tutorial: Thursdays 8:30-9:30 AM
Location: W18
Instructor: Dr. Zheger Hassan
Email: zhassan3@uwo.ca
Office: Lucas Annex
Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:

Following several waves of democratization, the world is experiencing a democratic rollback. Over the last two decades, countries have suffered erosion in their democratic institutions and practices – some democratic regimes have been stifled or even overthrown by nondemocratic forces. At the same time, fewer autocratic regimes are transitioning to democracy. This course will furnish students with the tools for understanding the contemporary assault on democracy and the apparent rise of authoritarianism. The course will explore the scope and causes of this democratic erosion by drawing on theoretical ideas, empirical evidence, and by adopting a comparative approach. To this end, we will be guided by key questions such as: How do we know when democratic institutions are under attack? What are the main causes undermining democracy? Who are the main actors that are responsible for eroding democracy? What are the main lessons for democracies that are facing pressure from nondemocratic forces?

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Describe the main features of democracy and authoritarianism;
- Critically evaluate the causes and factors contributing to the erosion of democracy;
- Identify and explain the role of domestic and international actors in undermining democracy;
- Describe the contemporary challenges facing democracies;
- Outline the factors that contribute to successful democratic consolidation;
- Develop the ability to critically evaluate academic and non-academic sources related to democracy and democratic erosion; and
- Develop the ability and skills to critically assess information and to clearly communicate your knowledge in written and oral form.

Note on course content and delivery: The course material will be delivered to students in-person during the scheduled day and time listed for our course.

The educational materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, lecture notes and slides, handout materials, examinations and assignments, and any materials posted to OWL, are the intellectual property of the course instructor. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of a given course. Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, or textual material of lecture content to third-party websites violates an instructor's intellectual property rights, and the Canadian Copyright Act. Recording lectures in any way is prohibited in this course unless specific permission has been granted by the instructor. Failure to follow these instructions may be in contravention of the university's Student Non-Academic Code of Conduct and/or Code of Academic Conduct, and will result in appropriate penalties. Participation in this course constitutes an agreement by all parties to abide by the relevant University Policies, and to respect the intellectual property of others during and after their association with Huron University College.

Note on classroom etiquette and communication with instructor:

Before entering the classroom, please silence all communications devices, including smart phones, mobile phones, watch phones, or any other disruptive technology that I may have neglected to list. Students may email me to ask short questions related to the course and should expect a response within 48 hours. Longer questions can be answered during my regular office hours or by appointment.

Required Readings:

1. The required readings (articles and book chapters) will be made available on the course website through OWL.
2. Students should also consult the media on a regular basis to stay updated on the state of democracy in the world. Some suggestions include reading/listening to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *BBC*.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Assignment	Value	Date Due
Tutorial	25	Ongoing
Research Paper	25	October 20, 2022
Presentation	20	Nov. 15-Dec. 1, 2022
Final Exam	30	Exam Period (December 2022)

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance at weekly tutorial sessions is *strongly recommended* for success in the course. One-third of the tutorial grade will be determined by your attendance and the remainder by your active and engaged participation. Tutorials will provide students with the opportunity to ask questions, make comments, and discuss the lecture and readings. To receive full credit for participation students must not only regularly attend the discussion section, but also have

completed the reading assignments for that week and actively participate in the discussion. Students are expected to participate in a constructive and respectful manner. Please refer to Huron's 'Code of Student Conduct' (available on our OWL site) for additional guidance on classroom expectations.

Research Paper (October 20, 2022):

Each student will be expected to conduct research and produce a report on the state of democracy in a country to be assigned to them. It is recommended that students draft a proposal, which should include a brief outline of the topic, a clear statement of your primary research question(s), a tentative argument (i.e., thesis statement), and a provisional bibliography (including books and articles).

The assignment is due on October 20, 2022, by 11:59 PM. Papers must be between 2,000-2,500 words in length, double-spaced, not counting appendices or the compulsory title page or bibliography. The paper must be formatted in Times New Roman or Calibri 12pt font with 2.54 cm margins all around. Papers that do not meet these basic criteria will be penalized. Students must conduct research with a **MINIMUM of 10 sources**. Of these, reference at least four relevant articles from academic journals and at least one to two books. Note that while such sources as current affairs magazines (Economist, Foreign Policy, etc.) or media sites (NYT, BBC, etc.) are informative, they are different from academic peer-reviewed journals. Students must avoid using Wikipedia – it may be useful to get a quick overview of a topic, but it is not always reliable, and therefore must be avoided. Further instructions and detailed guidelines will be posted to OWL.

The research paper should be well-written and organized – marks will be deducted for poorly written or poorly organized papers. Style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are all important and will affect the grade.

Research Paper Presentation:

From November 15 to December 1, 2022, students will be expected to attend and participate in a class conference that will examine the state of democracy in the world. Each student will present their paper and research on the primary challenge facing democracy in their selected/assigned country. The aim of the conference is to identify (where possible) the factors that are undermining/weakening or thwarting democracy. Students will sign up or be assigned to panels and make individual twenty-minute presentations (ten minutes of presentation and ten minutes of questions/comments from audience) outlining the state of democracy in their country and presenting their arguments and research. The audience (myself and your fellow classmates) will raise questions, comments, and provide feedback following each presentation.

Final Exam (December 2022):

The final exam will take place during the Final Exam Period in December 2022. The final exam will be in-person on a date and location to be determined by the University.

Academic Offenses and Plagiarism:

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the University policy on plagiarism.

All written assignments must be submitted in electronic format to the plagiarism checking website Turnitin.com (available through the course website and under license to the University). Please be advised that: All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com

Late Policy:

Read carefully: Written assignments must be submitted by the deadline by 11:59 PM. If you fail to meet this deadline, your assignment will be considered late. Late assignments will receive a penalty of 15%. Late assignments are then due the following week by 11:59 PM. After that, the assignment will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

Extensions will be granted ONLY under the following circumstances:

- (1) Humanitarian grounds (e.g., in the case of death or serious illness in the family);
- (2) Medical grounds.

In each circumstance, you will be expected to provide documented evidence. A copy of which may also be submitted to the Academic Dean's Office.

POL2299F Class Schedule and Weekly Reading List:

Week 1 (September 8): Introduction to the Course

Review of the course, content and readings, assignments, and evaluation. Outline of my expectations for you and your expectations of me.

Reading: Course Outline

Week 2 (September 13): Definitions and Categories of Regime-Types

Readings: Carsten Anckar and Cecilia Fredriksson, "Classifying Political Regimes 1800–2016: A Typology and a New Dataset," *European Political Science: EPS*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (2019): 84-96.

Tutorial (September 15): Defining and Theorizing Democratic and Non-democratic Regimes

Reading: Mike Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, "Classifying political regimes," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1996): 3-36.

Week 3 (September 20): Democratic Erosion and Backsliding

Readings: Ellen Lust and David Waldner, *Unwelcome Change: Understanding, Evaluating, and Extending Theories of Democratic Backsliding* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2015), pp. 1-15.

Tutorial (September 22): Is Democracy Under Attack?

Reading: Nancy Bermeo, "On Democratic Backsliding," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 27, No. 1 (2016): 5-19.

Week 4 (September 27): Using Democratic Institutions to Undermine Democracy

Reading: Ozan Varol, "Stealth Authoritarianism," *Iowa Law Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4 (2015): 1673-1742. (Read parts I, II, and III.)

Tutorial (September 29): Undermining Democracy From Within

Reading: Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman, "The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2021): 27-41.

Week 5 (October 4): The Impact of Populism and Demagoguery on Democracy

Readings: Sheri Berman, "The Pipe Dream of Undemocratic Liberalism," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2017): 29-38.

Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Erica Frantz, "How Democracies Fall Apart: Why Populism is a Pathway to Autocracy," *Foreign Affairs* (2016).

Tutorial (October 6): Populism in Practice

Readings: Takis Pappas, "Populists in Power," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2019): 70-84.

Cas Mudde, "Europe's Populist Surge: A Long Time in the Making," *Foreign Affairs* (2016).

Week 6 (October 11): Information, Disinformation, and Democratic Erosion

Readings: Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Dangerous Demagogues and Weaponized Communication," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 3, (2019): 264-279.

Luiza Bandeira et al., "Disinformation in Democracies: Strengthening Digital Resilience in Latin America," *Atlantic Council* (2019).

Tutorial (October 13): Guarding against Misinformation

Reading: Francis Fukuyama, "Making the Internet Safe for Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2021): 37-44

Week 7 (October 18): Economic Inequality, Neoliberalism, and Democracy

Readings: Dani Rodrik, "Populism and the Economics of Globalization," *Journal of International Business Policy*, Vol. 1 (2018): 12-33.

Tutorial (October 20): Examining Ecuador

Reading: John Polga-Hecimovich and Francisco Sanchez, "Ecuador's Return to the Past," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2021): 5-18.

Week 8 (October 25): The Role of the Military in Democratic Backsliding

Readings: Richard H. Kohn, "How Democracies Control the Military," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1997): 140-153.

Tutorial (October 27): Examining Myanmar (Burma)

Reading: Zoltan Barany, "Burma: The Generals Strike Back," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2021): 22-36.

(October 31-November 4): Reading Week -- No Classes this Week

Week 9: (November 1): The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Democracies

Readings: Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, "Democracy in a year of crisis," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2021): 45-60.

Tutorial (November 3): The Impact of Pandemic Restrictions on Freedom Cambodia

Reading: John D. Ciorciari, "Pandemic Containment and Authoritarian Spread: Cambodia's Covid-19 Responses," *Asia Policy*, Vol. 29, No. 1(2022): 4-9.

Week 10 (November 8): Polarization and Democratic Erosion

Reading: Milan Svobik, "Polarization versus Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (2019): 20-32.

Tutorial (November 10): Managing Polarization

Reading: Jennifer McCoy and Murat Somer, (2021). "Overcoming Polarization," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2021): 6-21.

Weeks 11-13 (November 15-December 1): Student Presentations

Week 14 (December 6): Reflection and Concluding Remarks and Final Exam Review



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022

Pandemic Contingency

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no further disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.

- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#). The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may

apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at

huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/> Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>
Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1> Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academic-support.uwo.ca/>
Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>
Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services:

huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca Community

Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -

[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)