

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Contemporary Challenges to Democracy

Course Number and Section:

POLISCI

3397F 550

Instructor Name(s): Zheger Hassan

Instructor Email(s): zhassan3@uwo.ca

Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Following several waves of democratization, the world is experiencing a democratic rollback. During the last two decades, many countries have suffered erosion in their democratic institutions and practices – some democratic regimes have been stifled or even displaced by nondemocratic forms of governance. The goal of the course is to help students to understand how and to what extent modern democracies are under threat. It will do so by furnishing students with the tools for understanding the contemporary assault on democracies. 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: What does democratic erosion look like? How do we know when democratic institutions are under attack? What are the main causes and who are the main actors undermining democracy? What are the main lessons for democracies that are facing pressure from nondemocratic forces?

Learning Outcomes:

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;

Identify and 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.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

The required readings (articles and book chapters) will be made available on the course website through OWL.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance and Participation	12/15/24	30
Seminar Presentation	TBD	20
Research Paper 1	October 11, 2024	25
Research Paper 2	December 6, 2024	25

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Monday, July 29, 2024