Course Description

The notion of democratic transitions has become a “buzzword” in political science. This course examines the conceptual framework surrounding this idea. Because this term is of recent origin, having proliferated after the collapse of communism, the question needs to be addressed whether the idea of a democratic transition represents a moment of Western triumphalism in the wake of communism’s collapse or a legitimate theory applicable across time and space. To interrogate the notion of democratic transitions suggests a number of questions: First, what is the nature of the two core concepts that comprise this theory, namely “democracy” and “transition.” Is the concept of democracy subject to a universal definition? Did it mean the same thing in ancient Athens, for example, as it does in the modern era, e.g., in contemporary United States, India, Spain and Japan? Second, what do we mean by the concept of transition? Do all transitions assume the same form? Is the notion of transition the same in early modern Europe as it is in post-communist Eastern Europe and non-Western societies of the 21st century? Finally, how do we know when a transition is successful? What do we mean by a democratic consolidation? Are democracies ever fully consolidated? Alexis de Tocqueville predicted an imminent universalization of democracy in the 1840s. After the “war to end all wars,” and the defeat of fascism during World War II, further predictions were forthcoming that the ascendancy of democracy was right around the corner.

What this course suggests is that the theorist who is committed to democracy in a normative as well as analytic sense needs to be extremely cautious about accepting formulaic propositions about the long-term sustainability of democratic governance. It also suggests the need to explore the antithesis of democratic governance, namely the causes of authoritarian rule. While we may want to develop a more “open-ended” approach to democratic change, this does not mean that we cannot formulate testable hypotheses about the causal factors that promote democracy as well as those that impede its implementation and lead instead to political repression. Finally, how can we synthesize “small N,” case study oriented research on democratic transitions with larger structural and especially quantitative research on the topic?

Course requirements entail periodic presentation of readings in class and the submission of a research paper of at least 20 pages, irrespective of footnotes and bibliography. While the instructor has generated two-thirds of the course readings, seminar participants are expected to submit the remaining one third of the readings that reflect their own research interests. It is assumed that seminar participants will write their research papers with an eye to submitting them, either as single authors, or in collaboration with another seminar member(s). Because this seminar will continue during the Spring 2007 Semester as 790:686 Advanced research in Comparative Politics: “Legitimacy, Hegemony and the State,” seminar participants may want to wait to submit their work for publication until May 2007. An article accepted for publication prior to completion of the dissertation will benefit the student. However, seminar participants are under no obligation to submit their course work for publication.

My office hours are Wednesday from 10:30-12:00 in Hickman Hall 512; my email is: <emdavis@rci.rutgers.edu>. All students will be assigned to the seminar listserv.
Course Readings
Available at the Douglass Coop Bookstore, Nichol Ave., (732)932-9017 (contact: Deb Nilson)

Davis, Eric, *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (California)
Dahl, Robert, *Polyarchy* (Yale)
Held, Davis, *Models of Democracy* (Stanford)

Course Outline

I. Introduction (January 19, 26)
Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 1-32
Juan Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 3-15
Recommended:
Larry Diamond et al, *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, xiii-xlvii

II. Classical conceptualizations of democracy (January 26)
Held, *Models of Democracy*, 16-120
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 31-98
Recommended:

III. Transitions to democracy I: Early modern Europe (Feb. 2, 9)
Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 3-110
Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 1-61
Recommended:
Skocpol, Theda, *States and Social Revolutions*, 47-111

IV. Transitions to Democracy II: an American exceptionalism? (Feb. 9)
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 246-315, 572-584
Huntington, Samuel, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 93-139
Moore, *Social Origins*, 111-155
Recommended:
Hartz, Louis, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, 89-144

V. Transitions to Democracy III: Non-Western Countries Under Colonial Rule (Feb. 16)
Davis, E., *Challenging Colonialism: Bank Misr and Egyptian Industrialization*, 1920-
VI. Modern theories of authoritarianism and democracy: Western and Non-Western Models (Feb. 3, Mar 2)
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 305-340
Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 62-104
Binder, “The Natural History of Development Theory,” *Islamic Liberalism*, 24-84
Ronald Inglehart, “Culture and Democracy,” in Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington, eds., *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, 80-97

Recommneded:
Held, *Models of Democracy*, 231-273

VII. The Antinomies of Authoritarian Rule: Spain and Iraq (Mar. 9, 23)
Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 189-220, 247-269
Linz & Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidations*, 87-115
Richard Gunther et al, *Democracy in Spain*, 1-130
Davis, *Memories of State*, 109-147

Recommneded:
Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, 465-482, 764-807

VIII. Historical Memory, Religion and Democracy: Egypt and Iraq (Mar. 30)
Davis, *Memories of State*, 1-28
Tocqueville, *The Old Régime*, 5-14
Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, 243-335
Hanafi, Hasan, “Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society: A Reflective Islamic
IX. Ethnic Conflict and Democratic Transitions: Spain and Serbia (Apr. 6)
Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 222-266
Montserrat Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 34-69

IX. Ethnic Conflict and Democratic Transitions: Spain and Serbia (Apr. 6)
Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 222-266
Montserrat Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy*, 34-69

Recommended:
Robert Thomas, *Serbia Under Milošević*, 163-175

X. Democratic Transitions: Participant Readings I (Apr. 13)
Nietzsche, *The Uses and Abuses of History*, 5-73
Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, 253-264
Barry R. Strauss, “The Melting Pot, the Mosaic and the Agora,” in *Athenian political Thought*, 252-264

XI. Democratic Transitions: Participant Readings II (Apr. 20)

XII. Democratic Transitions: Participant Readings III (Apr. 27)
Sheldon Garon, “From Meiji to Heisei: The State and Civil Society in Japan,” in Frank J.

XIII. Summations and course evaluation (May 2)