



MASARYK UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL STUDIES

**Comparative Transitions to Democracy**  
School of Social Studies .  
Spring Semester 2009

**Lecturer**

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**Course Objective**

The goal of the course is to introduce students to the study of the processes of democratisation in a comparative way. This is a course designed to describe and compare the processes of democratisation that have taken place in different parts of the world and to analyse similarities and differences between them developing a holistic understanding of transitions to democracy.

**Course Description**

This course analyses the historical processes of democratisation that have occurred in different societies and in different historical times. The first part of the course will be devoted to the study of the concept of democracy and transition to democracy from a normative perspective. In the second part of the course there will be an analysis of the different waves of democratisation with a study of selected case studies. The last part of the course will be focused on looking to the future analysing the prospects for democratisation in the parts of the world in which this societal model has not been installed.

**Course Outcomes**

A student that successfully complete the course should be able

- to understand the concept of democracy and the factors that initiate processes of democratisation
- to distinguish different processes of democratisation in different historical periods establishing similarities and differences between them
- to be acquainted with the main theories and models of regime transformation and to be able to apply them to the analysis of different cases

- to understand the role of the actors, structures and institutions and external factors in the processes of democratisation
- to develop an ethical position towards the problem of democratisation and its dynamics

### Course Requirements

1. Class participation is required: sessions will take place every two weeks and will last 3 hours. Students that will not be able to attend the class will have to notify in advance their absence.
2. Students are expected to read the required reading(s) for each seminar. If there is more than one article or book chapter, students are expected to read all of them.
3. Students are encouraged to actively participate in the classes by posing questions of clarification or bringing up problems for discussion. One part of the final evaluation is class participation and the lack of attendance or non-active participation will result in a low grade.
4. Students are expected to write one long essay on one of the topics that will be proposed by the lecturer in a list published in the first or second session. Deadlines and essay requirements will be handed in conjunction to the list of topics.
5. Students will also have to write a minimum of two class tests (reaction papers) in which they will have to apply the contents of class lectures to practical situations.
6. Every student in the class is expected to make a small presentation leading into a discussion that will take place at the end of every session.
7. There will be a final in-class written exam, consisting of questions based on class lectures, readings and discussions in class.
8. All the papers produced by the students will have to follow the standards of academic correction and integrity. References and bibliography list must be exhaustive and cases of plagiarism will be accepted (plagiarism will be punish with an F in the final evaluation).

### Grading

The final grade will be calculated as a composite evaluation consisting of three parts:

- |                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1) Class Participation | 35% |
| 2) Long essay          | 25% |
| 3) Final Exam          | 40% |

Class Participation: This part of the evaluation will consist in three different elements; class tests, class presentation and class participation on a daily basis. Students will have to write at least two class tests (delivered during the class and to be completed within the class or to be handed at the beginning of the next session). The role of these papers is not so much to test memorisation but to show the capacity of the students applying concepts explained in the class to more practical situations.

Every student in the class will have to make a short class presentation. With the class presentation students will test their skills to communicate in an academic

environment. There will be one presentation assigned to students in each of the sessions with the exception of the introductory class.

Participation on a daily basis refers to the attitude of the students in the class. Willingness to engage will be rewarded; on the contrary, reluctance to participate or disruptive attitudes (lack of punctuality, chatting...) will result in a low grade.

Long essay: Every student will have to write a long essay. The topics, deadlines and requirements will be set in the first or second session. The paper will have to be written according to the standards of academic correction and the deadlines will be strictly enforced (a late paper will result in an F grade).

Final Exam: At the end of the semester, there will be final written exam. The exam will be divided into two parts. The first part will be short essay questions and the second one will be a text commentary.

Grading scale:

56-60: A  
51-55: B  
46-50: C  
41-45: D  
36-40: E  
0-35: F

Workload:

At least two class tests (300-600 words each)  
One long essay (from 3000 to 4000 words)  
Class readings (max. 100 pages per session)

The literature is available on the Internet or in the course reader.

**Class Schedule**

Session	Seminar topic	Seminar discussion and presentation
1	Introduction to the course: Concepts of Democracy	Not available
2	Democratic Transitions: Types, Actors and Patterns	Can we compare transitions?
3	The Long Democratic Cycle: Liberalisation and Democratization	Democracy and markets: Is there a third way?
4	Restoring Democracies: The Post-WWII Democratising Experiences	Dealing with the past: processes of lustration

5	The Development of the “Transitology”: Classic Transition to Democracy in the 1970 and 1980s	The role of the leader: does transition need an engineer?
6	Communism Collapsing and the Total Transitions	Are the post-communist transitions over?
7	A Democratizing World? Prospects for Democratization in the New Millennium	Can democracy be exported?

#### Readings:

The basic manual for this course are Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996) and it is also recommended to read Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991) and Guillermo O’Donnell, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusion about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986). In addition to the manual and the recommended books, students must read selected chapters and articles for each of the units covered in the course.

Revised, February 2009  
O. Hidalgo-Redondo