

Political Science 586: The Quality of Democracy

Spring Semester 2018

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Office Hours: By appointment

With the coming of the Third Wave of democracy, many scholars expected politics in the new democracies to improve dramatically. In fact, many of these new democracies experienced significant problems, the most notable being citizens' own dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy. These disappointments gave rise to the study of democratic quality – to the ways that both new and old democracies function.

This course will introduce students to the study of democratic quality. It will present some of the major conceptions of democratic quality as well as ways for measuring and assessing democratic quality. The main goal of the seminar is to prepare students to undertake original research on democratic quality.

Course Requirements

As a small seminar class, active participation is essential to success. Students are expected to have done the readings before class and to be prepared to discuss them intelligently. This means not just being able to summarize the arguments in the readings, but also to express critical opinions about them.

Each student is required to complete one short paper which will analyze the assigned readings for one class lesson. The analysis should not simply summarize the papers, but should critically analyze them and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. It should be approximately 2-3 pages in length and is due when the readings will be discussed.

Students should also choose one recommended reading which they wish to present in class (they may also propose their own additional readings). A paper is not required for this assignment, but students should prepare a short outline or slides for this presentation.

There will be a midterm that will cover the course material. The midterm will be open-book and open-note. Students will have 24 hours to complete the exam.

For the final exercise students can choose between writing a research design on democratic quality, an in-depth literature review of some aspect of democratic quality, or their own research proposal. I will provide more information about these options in class. The final paper should be 8-10 pages.

Course Evaluation

Evaluation in the class will be based on the following exercises:

Class Participation:	15%
Short Paper:	15%
Presentation:	10%
Midterm Exam:	30%
Final Project:	30%

Course Outline

PART 1: Ideals

Lesson 1: Thinking about Democratic Quality

- Andrew Roberts, *The Quality of Democracy in Eastern Europe*, chapter 2
- Achen and Bartels, "Democratic Ideals and Reality"

Recommended Readings

- Jane Mansbridge, "Rethinking Representation", *APSR*
- Gerardo Munck, "Conceptualizing the Quality of Democracy"

Lesson 2: Policy Responsiveness

- Christopher Wlezien, "Public Opinion and Policy Representation"
- Andrew Sabl, "The Two Cultures of Democratic Theory", *Perspectives on Politics*

Recommended Readings

- Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson, "Dynamic Responsiveness", *APSR* (1995).
- Lupia and Matsusaka, "Direct Democracy: New Approaches to Old Questions", *ARPS*

- Alan Monroe, “Public Opinion and Public Policy, 1980-1993”
- Christopher Wlezien, “Patterns of Representation”, *Journal of Politics* (2004).
- Druckman and Jacobs, “Lumpers and Splitters”, *Public Opinion Quarterly* (2006).

Lesson 3: Electoral Accountability

- Powell and Whitten, “A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context”, *AJPS* (1993)
- John Sides, “What Political Science Can Teach Us about Donald Trump”

Recommended Readings

- Mackuen, Erikson, and Stimson, “Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the Economy”, *APSR* (1992).
- Duch and Stevenson, “Assessing the Magnitude of the Economic Vote over Time and across Nations”, *Electoral Studies* (2006).
- Susan Stokes, *Public Support for Market Reform in New Democracies*, chapter 1.
- Hellwig and Samuels, “Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes”, *BJPS* (2008)

Lesson 4: Mandate Responsiveness

- Susan Stokes, “What Do Policy Switches Tell Us about Democracy?”
- Elin Naurin, *Election Promises, Party Behavior, and Voter Perceptions*, chapter 4.

Recommended Readings

- Grossback, Peterson, and Stimson, *Mandate Politics*, chapter 1.

Midterm Exam

PART 2: Where Things Can Go Wrong

Lesson 5: The Quality of Citizens: Citizen Rationality and Deliberation

- Roberts, “The Quality of Citizens”, working paper
- Delli Carpini, “An Overview of the State of Citizens’ Knowledge about Politics”

Recommended Readings

- Kuklinski and Quirk, “Reconsidering the Rational Public”
- Mutz, Diana. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy*, chapter 1
- Nyhan, Brendan and Jason Reifler. 2012. “Misinformation and Fact-checking: Research Findings from Social Science.” New America Foundation Media Policy Initiative Research Paper.

Lesson 6: The Quality of Citizens: Participation and Toleration

- Andre Blais, “Political Participation” in *Comparing Democracies 3*
- Gibson, “Political Intolerance in the Context of Democratic Theory” in *Oxford Handbook of Political Science*

Recommended Readings

- Atkinson and Fowler, “ Social Capital and Voter Turnout: Evidence from Saints’ Days Fiestas in Mexico”, *BJPS* (2013).

Lesson 7: Voting Biases

- Achen and Bartels, “The Very Basis of Reasons: Groups, Social Identities, and Political Psychology”
- Achen and Bartels, “Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks”
- Bryan Caplan, “The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies”

Recommended Readings

- Achen and Bartels, “It feels Like We’re Thinking: The Rationalizing Voter and Electoral Democracy”
- Larry Bartels, “Partisan Bias in Economic Accountability” in *Unequal Democracy*.

Lesson 8: Democratic Inequality

- Martin Gilens, “Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness”, *Public Opinion Quarterly* (2005).
- Page, Bartels, and Seawright, “Democracy and Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans”, *Perspectives on Politics* (2014).

Recommended Readings

- Soroka and Wlezien, “On the Limits to Inequality in Representation”, *PS* (2008).
- Adams and Ezrow, “Who Do European Parties Represent?”, *Journal of Politics* (2009)

Lesson 9: Corruption

- Treisman, “The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-National Study”, *Journal of Public Economics* (2000).
- Ansolobehere and Snyder, “Why So Little Money in Politics”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2003).

Recommended Readings

- Hall and Deardorff, “Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy”, *APSR* (2006).