
course time: Monday and Wednesday, 4:00pm-5:20pm
office hours: Mondays 10-10:50am, Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm, Fridays 10-10:50am
or by appointment

Final Paper Due Date

For non-degree candidates (i.e., everyone except graduating seniors), final papers are due on Wednesday, **December 13 at 4:30pm**. For degree candidates (graduating seniors), final papers are due on Monday, **December 11 at 4:30pm**.

Course Description

On January 20 of 2021, the United States inaugurated a new president. The ability to transfer executive authority from one person to another—particularly when those individuals represent different political parties—is a key defining feature of democracy. And yet, for the first time in American history, a mob of supporters of the outgoing president occupied the capital building on the day that Congress was scheduled to certify Joe Biden’s victory in the Electoral College.

Given these recent events, our Capstone on the “Dilemmas of Democracy” could not be timelier. What is democracy, and why does it matter? How does democratic practice differ around the world? How can democracies address challenges from forces including populism, climate change, and the rise of conspiratorial thinking? What sorts of institutions are best for democratic durability, and what sorts of institutions are most just? We will think about these and related question over the course of five units. First, we will address debates about how to define democracy. Second, we will examine contemporary challenges to democracy, focusing in particular on challenges from the new populism and climate change. Third, we will look at the role of institutions in constituting and protecting democracies. Fourth, we will consider the relationship between individual identities, social and cultural practices, and democracy. And in the final unit, we will develop a set of readings together which address some issue or set of issues broadly related to the course’s theme.

Required Texts / Materials

All required readings are available on the course’s D2L page. Although you are welcome to read on an electronic device if you are comfortable reading that way, I encourage you to print up that day’s reading and bring it to class. If you have run out of free prints from TCU and/or don’t have another way to print, please come to my office!

Course Policies and Requirements

Assignments

Discussion questions and other homework assignments (5% of final grade): You must submit one discussion question for each assigned reading to the Discussion Board on D2L by 9:00am the day of class. A satisfactory submission earns you a 100, and an

unsatisfactory submission earns a 0. Questions are unsatisfactory when they are late or when they suggest that you did not do the reading or think very hard about the reading. Successful questions might be about the overall theme of the piece, about a specific example or quote from the piece, about the implications of the findings and/or methods, etc. Anything is on the table, as long as it is thoughtful, based on the reading, and demonstrates you are thinking critically about the issues raised by the reading and the course. In addition to discussion questions, there may be a few other short assignments that will be factored into this grade. Unless otherwise noted, those other assignments will count the same as one discussion question. I will drop the lowest grade here (which means that you can skip a discussion question, provided you do all of the other discussion questions and the short homework assignments, and still earn a 100% here).

Discussion leading (15% of final grade): Each student will be required to lead discussion on the assigned readings several times over the course of the semester. A more specific assignment, grading rubric, and discussion-leading schedule will be distributed early in the semester.

Reading selection and discussion leading (15% of final grade): For the final unit of the class, students will be put in groups that will select two readings and lead discussion on the readings that they have selected. A more specific assignment, grading rubric, and discussion-leading schedule will be distributed early in the semester.

Reactions papers on readings (each worth 15% of final grade): Each student will write two reaction papers over the course of the semester that respond to assigned readings. Your two reaction papers cannot be on the same day/topic that you serve as discussion leader. A specific assignment will be distributed early in the semester.

Capstone project (30% of final grade): This will function as a final project for this course. The (approximately 3000 word) paper that you write will build from this course's materials, but it will also incorporate and reflect on your experiences as a political science major. A specific assignment for the paper (including a grading rubric) will be distributed early in the semester. It is due Wednesday, **December 13 at 4:30pm**, or Monday, **December 11 at 4:30pm** for graduating seniors.

Attendance (5% of final grade): This is a discussion class, and it will not work if you are not there to discuss the material! That said, we are still in the midst of a pandemic, so if you don't feel well, then **DON'T COME TO CLASS!**

I distinguish between two types of absences: **communicated** and **non-communicated**. A communicated absence is one of which you notify me by email before the beginning of class (or, in extreme cases, during or soon after the class).

A non-communicated absence is any absence of which you fail to notify me before the beginning of the next class. Your attendance grade will be the percent of classes that you attended or for which you had communicated absences.

Grading

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

A: 93.45 and above	B: 82.45-86.44	C: 72.45-76.44	D: 62.45-66.44
A-: 89.45-93.44	B-: 79.45-82.44	C-: 69.45-72.44	D-: 59.45-62.44
B+: 86.45-89.44	C+: 76.45-79.44	D+: 66.45-69.44	F: 59.44 and below

Grade Breakdown

Assignments, Exams/Quizzes, Presentations, etc.	Percentage of final grade
Discussion questions and other homework assignments	5%
Two occasions of solo discussion leading (7.5% each)	15%
Reading selection and discussion leading	15%
Reactions papers on readings (15% each)	30%
Capstone paper	30%
Attendance	5%

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the material was returned.

Late Work

In general, late assignments lose 10 points (out of 100) per 24 hours late. So, if a paper is due at 2:00pm on Tuesday and you turn it in at 3:00, you will lose 10 points. And if you turn it in after 2:00pm on Wednesday, you will lose 20 points, (and after 2:00 on Thursday, you will lose 30 points... etc.). However, if you miss or are late in submitting any assignment because of an Official University Absence, an illness, or a personal or family emergency, please communicate with me as soon as you can we can discuss rescheduling your work. You don't have to tell me the nature of the illness or emergency; just let me know that you are dealing with an illness or an emergency and we can discuss an alternate deadline for your work.

Office Hours

I encourage students to take advantage of my [office hours](#) in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. While you are free to drop by without an appointment, if you want to make sure that I will be available right when you drop by, please feel free to sign up for an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/michael-strausz/10min>. That link gives you a choice of either an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting; please feel free to select whichever is more convenient for you. If I am not able to hold in-person office hours at any point, I will email the class and temporarily move office hours to Zoom. If you have classes or other obligations during my office hours and would like to meet with me, please email me to make an appointment.

Policy on Generative AI tools (like ChatGPT)

I'm interested in encouraging your own creativity, and hearing your own ideas and your own voice. Every aspect of your class work—including discussion questions, reading reaction papers, and your capstone paper—must therefore be your own and cannot be created (even partially) by any other person, organization, software, program, or artificial intelligence. Use of any of these elements will be considered a violation of academic integrity and a form of plagiarism.

Technology Policy

Students wishing to use computers, tablets, or smartphones to take notes in class are requested to use those devices only for class related purposes. I know how tempting it can be to use an electronic device for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Ravelry (the knitting social networking site), Instagram, TikTok, BeReal, games, and other fun distractions, but if I catch a student doing so, that student will no longer be permitted to bring his or her electronic device to class. Remember that your primary responsibility at TCU is to learn. If you don't trust yourself to avoid online distractions, I encourage you to take notes with a pen or pencil. If I catch you using an electronic device for non-class related purposes during class, you will lose permission to use that device in class for the rest of the semester. Students wishing to make audio or video recordings of classes are required to see me to discuss acceptable use of those recordings and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly. In the absence of written permission, you are not permitted to make audio or video recordings of classes.

E-mail Policy

Course-related communications will be sent to your TCU email account. Thus, check your TCU email regularly. "I did not see the email that you sent me" is not an acceptable excuse for failing to complete required course tasks. Also, feel free to email me questions, comments, or suggestions. In general (i.e. unless there are extraordinary circumstances), I will respond to student emails within 24 hours during the week or 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

Extra Credit

If I decide to establish extra credit opportunities, the specifics will be announced in class or emailed out to all students enrolled in the class. So, come to class and check your TCU email regularly.

TCU Policies

This course will be conducted in accordance with all relevant TCU policies, which you can find here: <https://cte.tcu.edu/tcu-syllabus-policies/>.

Schedule

21-Aug *Welcome*
No assigned reading.

23-Aug *Setting the agenda*

Mayer, Jane. 2021. "The Big Money Behind the Big Lie." *The New Yorker*, August 2.

Murray, Caroline, Marley Duchovnay, and Natalie Jomini Stroud. 2022. "Understanding Election Fraud Beliefs: Interviews with People Who Think Trump Likely Won the 2020 Election." University of Texas Center for Media Engagement, Last Modified June 9.
<https://mediaengagement.org/research/understanding-election-fraud-beliefs/>.

Unit 1: Defining Democracy

28-Aug *Classical and minimalist definitions of democracy*
Dahl, Robert Alan. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1-32.

Przeworski, Adam. 2003. "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense." In *The Democracy Sourcebook*, edited by Robert Alan Dahl, Ian Shapiro and José Antônio Cheibub. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

30-Aug **CLASS CANCELLED**

4-Sep **LABOR DAY**

6-Sep *Democracy and inclusion*
Taylor, Astra. 2019. "Reinventing the People: Inclusion/Exclusion" *Democracy May Not Exist, but We'll Miss It When It's Gone*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Unit 2: Contemporary Challenges to Democracy

11-Sep *Authoritarian populism*
Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2017. "Trump and the Populist Authoritarian Parties: The Silent Revolution in Reverse." *Perspectives on Politics* 15 (2):443-454.

Schäfer, Armin. 2022. "Cultural backlash? How (not) to explain the rise of authoritarian populism." *British Journal of Political Science* 52 (4):1977-1993.

13-Sep *Populism and the media*
Steel, Gill, and Natsuki Kohama. 2022. "Populism and the print media: the case of Japan." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 23 (4):363-387.

18-Sep *The "paranoid style?"*
Hofstadter, Richard. 1964. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." *Harpers*, November, 77-86.

- 20-Sep *Democracy and pandemics*
Bisbee, James, and Diana Da In Lee. 2022. "Objective facts and elite cues: partisan responses to Covid-19." *The Journal of Politics* 84 (3):1278-1291.
- 25-Sep **CLASS CANCELLED FOR YOM KIPPUR**
- 27-Sep *Can democracy handle climate change?*
Fiorino, Daniel J. 2018. "How Democracies Can Handle Climate Change." In *Can Democracy Handle Climate Change?* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Unit 3: The Institutions of Democracy

- 2-Oct *The perils of presidentialism*
Stepan, Alfred, and Cindy Skach. 1994. "Presidentialism and Parliamentarism in Comparative Perspective." In *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, edited by Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 119-136.
- 4-Oct *Do elections reveal the will of the majority?*
Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy For Realists: Why Elections do not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 21-51.
- 9-Oct *A critique of Achen and Bartels*
Dalton, Russell. 2021. "The Representation Gap and Political Sophistication: A Contrarian Perspective." *Comparative Political Studies* 54 (5):889-917.
- 11-Oct *Let 1000 parties bloom*
Drutman, Lee. 2019. "Let a Thousand Parties Bloom." *Foreign Policy*: 22-27.

David Jolly, Christine Todd Whitman, and Andrew Yang, "Most Third Parties Have Failed. Here's Why Ours Won't," *The Washington Post*, July 27, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/07/27/forward-party-new-centrist-third/>.
- 16-Oct *Do democracies govern better?*
Lee, Don S., and Paul Schuler. 2020. "Testing the "China Model" of Meritocratic Promotions: Do Democracies Reward Less Competent Ministers Than Autocracies?" *Comparative Political Studies* 53 (3-4):531–566.
- 18-Oct *Democracy and prisons*

Weaver, Vesla M, and Amy E Lerman. 2010. "Political Consequences of the Carceral State." *American Political Science Review* 104 (4):817-833.

Unit 4: Societies, Cultures, and Democracy

23-Oct *Feminism and democracy*

Mansbridge, Jane. 1998. "Feminism and democracy." In *Feminism and Politics*, edited by Anne Phillips, 142-158. New York.

25-Oct *Social media and democracy*

Sunstein, Cass R. 2017. *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 157-175.

30-Oct *Conventional media and turnout*

Westwood, Sean Jeremy, Solomon Messing, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2020. "Projecting confidence: How the probabilistic horse race confuses and demobilizes the public." *The Journal of Politics* 82 (4):1530-1544.

1-Nov *How civil society can help "make democracy work"*

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1):65-78.

6-Nov Does democracy require separation of church and state?

Menchik, Jeremy. 2018. "Soft Separation Democracy." *Politics and Religion* 11 (4):863-883.

8-Nov *Democracy in the Middle East*

Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 36 (2):139-157.

13-Nov *Democracy and contesting stories of peoplehood*

Smith, Rogers M. 2020. "Toward Progressive Narratives of American Identity." *Polity* 52 (3):370-383.

Unit 5: Teaching Each Other about Democracy

15-Nov *Student-selected topic*

Assigned reading TBA.

20-Nov & **THANKGIVING BREAK**

22-Nov

27-Nov *Student-selected topic*

Assigned reading TBA.

29-Nov *Student-selected topic*
Assigned reading TBA.

4-Dec *Wrapping it all up*
No assigned reading.