PLSC 399
Politics of Democratization
SPRING 2009
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Professor Bidisha Biswas
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Email: bidisha.biswas@wwu.edu
Class time and location: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:50AM
CF 314
Office hours and location: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30pm-1:30pm, AH 411
or by appointment

This course will discuss some international dimensions of democratization. Students will examine the meaning of democracy and the international factors that can help or impede a transition to a democratic political process. We will explore the challenges of international democracy promotion efforts. While the focus will be on broader, thematic issues, we will also discuss cases from Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Course Materials

- Among Nations Reader (AN), available at the bookstore.

Additional reading assignments are either available online or at library reserve. Please note that you are expected to be familiar with the use of online library resources available at Western Washington University. If you are unfamiliar with the use of these resources, please see a librarian immediately.

Course Requirements

Your final grade in this course will be based on:

30% Reaction papers (2)
25% Group project and presentation
30% Exam
15% Class participation

Discussion: In-class discussion will be encouraged throughout the class. You are required to do your reading assignments before each class session. You are also expected to be aware of current world events. Possible news sources include (but are not limited to) www.aljazeera.net, www.nytimes.com, www.bbc.com. The Freedom House website (www.freedomhouse.org) is a good source of information on democracy-related issues around the world.

Students are expected to respect the opinions of other students and to engage in discussion and debates in a sensitive and respectful manner.
Reaction paper

You will be asked to submit written reaction papers for two of the class sessions. The paper should provide a brief summary of readings. The bulk of the paper should provide analyses and criticisms of the readings and include references to class discussions. You should conclude with your own reaction and opinion. Your position must be argued with reference to the readings and class discussion. You are required to refer to a minimum of two of the assigned articles. Approaches include: identify and respond to a central theme in the reading; review a controversy that emerges among the authors of the week or consider how the arguments of a given author or authors differ with or support conclusions drawn by previous readings; consider the implications of the week’s readings for various historical (or current) cases, etc. Bonus points will be awarded if you draw from external readings that are not on the assigned list. Your paper must follow the guidelines posted on Blackboard and discussed in class. These papers should be 4-6 pages long (Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced). Due dates for each reaction paper are marked in the syllabus. All papers must be submitted in hard copy by the due date, in class. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Class participation

Your class participation will be based on active engagement with the discussions. For the topic under discussion, you are required to have a set of two to four analytical questions about the arguments, concepts, themes and issues raised by the readings. These questions should be critical and thought-provoking. In other words, ask how and why questions. Raise questions about the arguments, the nature of the evidence, possible bias and implications for public policy. Compare the conclusions, evidence or concepts of one author with that of another. You must post these questions on Blackboard by 7PM the day before class. You are encouraged to read and respond to each other’s questions. Be prepared to ask and discuss your questions in class. The questions posed by the students will be the basis of class discussion. You must submit responses to at least three of the topics listed on the syllabus (note that some topics are discussed over two sessions). You will lose participation points for additional misses.

Paper assignment deadline

Details of the paper assignment are provided at the end of the syllabus.

- April 14: Country and group due by email at noon.
- April 28: Draft outline and bibliography due
- April 30: In-class sign-up for presentations
- May 12-May 28: In-class presentations
- June 4: Final papers are due by noon on June 4. A copy of the paper must be emailed to me at bidisha.biswas@wwu.edu by that time. In addition, a hard copy of the paper must be submitted to me in person or put in my mailbox in AH 415. Both emailed and hard copies are required. No late submissions will be accepted under any circumstances whatsoever.

You will select your country from the list that is provided at the end of the syllabus. Countries will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. Your draft proposal should discuss the importance of the country to the US and the information you have found so far regarding the country about its democracy status and
US support to the same. A preliminary bibliography **must** be included. It should not be more than 1-2 pages long. This draft will be graded for clarity and effort.

The final paper should be between 4-6 pages, Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced. I will not accept papers that are longer or shorter than this stipulation.

**Discussion group meetings**

The “1-hr. arranged” component of this course consists of a weekly discussion group meeting outside of class. Groups can meet at times of their choosing. They may also meet with me during my office hours or by prior appointment. The democracy promotion team and the discussion team should be the same. Discussion groups will be asked to present their points in class. **On or before June 4, each group member must submit a grade for their team members.** This should be emailed to me and will be kept confidential. Failure to submit a grade for your group members by the deadline will adversely affect your participation grade.

**Additional points:**

Students are responsible for following the academic honesty guidelines provided in the WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure. The penalty for academic dishonesty can and will include a failure in the course.

Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs at the beginning of the semester. Students should also inform the instructor, in advance, of any intended absences.

The syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified in advance of any changes.

**Course schedule**

**Session 1, April 31**

- **General introduction.** What is “democracy”? Does the international community benefit from the spread of democracy?
- **Discuss syllabus**
- **Discuss reaction paper assignment**
- **Review of IR theories**

**Session 2, April 2**

**What is Democracy?**

- Reaction paper due April 7
Session 3, April 7
Transitions to Democracy: The Initial Hopes


Reaction paper due April 14

Session 4, April 9
Is Democracy a Universal Value?

- Dae Jung, AN
- Ignatieff, AN

Reaction paper due April 14

Session 5, April 14
Why Should We Care? Democratic Peace

- John Owen, AN

Reaction paper due April 21

Team and country choices due today

Session 6, April 16
Area Focus: Africa


Reaction paper due April 21

Session 7 & 8, April 21 & April 23
Does Spreading Democracy Make Us Safe?


Reaction paper due April 28

Section 9&10, April 28 & 30

Transitions to Democracy: The Problems


Zakaria, AN

Reaction paper due May 5

Paper outline is due on April 28

In-class sign up for presentations on April 30

Session 11, May 5

Offering Carrots to Promote Democracy


Reaction paper due May 12

Session 12: May 7

A Crisis of Democracy?


Reaction paper due May 12

In-class presentations
Session 13: May 12 & 14
Area Focus: The Middle East
- Reaction paper due June 6
- In-class presentations

May 19
No class. Take home Exam. Details to Follow.

Session 14 & 15: May 21 & 26
Area Focus: South Asia
- Varshney, AN
- Recommended website: http://pakistaniat.com/ and Pakistani newspapers, such as Dawn
- Recommended Indian newsmagazine: www.outlookindia.com
- Reaction paper due May 30
- In-class presentations

Session 16: May 28
- Take home Exam Due
- In-class presentations
- Discussion on US Foreign Policy and the Promotion of Democracy. Readings to be Assigned.

June 2
Research and Writing Day. Work on Final Group Paper. No class meeting.

Session 17: June 4
- Final group paper due
- Wrap-up discussion

Final group papers are due by noon on June 4. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Details on Democracy Promotion

In groups of 2-3, form a country program team for the United States Agency of International Development (USAID). The Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has asked for a status report on the democracy promotion program in your country. It is your job to present her with a country-
specific analysis of the risks and opportunities faced by the US if it chooses to follow an active path of democracy promotion.

Your memo should be 3-4 pages (typed, double-spaced) and have the following sections:

1. **Historical and contextual section** that outlines the challenges and problems of the country that will affect the democratization process. News sources and recent scholarly analyses will help you with this section. Freedom House should also be a valuable guide (1 page)

2. **Review of democracy assistance programs** that are ongoing in the country. Main websites for reference include USAID, National Endowment for Democracy, International Crisis Group and Freedom House. Wikipedia is **not** an acceptable source of information; nor are blogs. Be specific. Survey some of the major techniques and areas of concentration that governmental and nongovernmental donors have used in your country. Have they concentrated on election monitoring? Designing parliament? Training political parties? Civil society? Remember, you should isolate your analysis to programs that are aimed at democracy promotion rather than development or humanitarian projects. (1-2 pages)

3. **Should the US promote democracy more aggressively in the country?** Why or why not? What are the risks of stepping back from democracy promotion? What are the benefits? Provide both the **pros and cons**. Remember to take into account political, logistical and budgetary constraints in providing your recommendations and analyses. (1 page)

4. **What is your overall recommendation?** Make sure you justify your position (One-half page)

**Make sure you refer to some of the ideas, theories and readings you learned in class to your case.**

**Suggested Sources (not an exhaustive list)**

Freedom House

*Journal of Democracy*

Council on Foreign Relations

*Foreign Affairs*

*Foreign Policy*

United States Institute for Peace

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Brookings Institute

National Endowment for Democracy

International Crisis Group

National Democratic Institute

Open Society Institute

**Your choice of countries is as follows:**

1. Iraq (2 teams permitted)
2. Iran
3. Afghanistan (2 teams permitted)
4. Syria
5. Egypt
6. Pakistan
7. Bangladesh
8. Indonesia

*(more on next page)*
9. Turkey
10. Palestinian Territories
11. Russia
12. Jordan