Political Science 4430
Senior Seminar in Political Science
Dr. Tracy L. R. Lightcap
Office: Room 204, Callaway Academic Building
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 - 11:30am or by appointment.

Required Materials
All the following are required books:

All these books can be found in the bookstore. We will also be reading some supplementary articles that will be distributed later.

Course Objectives
This course will be different from the other courses you have had in political science here at LaGrange College. It is aimed at getting you to integrate some of the many concepts and theories you have learned in your political science courses. You will not be talking about “comparative politics,” or “international politics,” or “judicial politics;” instead you will be talking about politics.

To accomplish this we will have to concentrate our efforts; an attempt to uncover general universals of politics could leave us floating in the ether. Instead, we will be looking at the meaning, origins, problems, and future of the main type of government we are familiar with: democracy. In particular, we will try to understand the recent shift toward democracy around the world and the forces producing and sustaining democratic rule in general. Some of the specific questions we will seek to address are:
... What exactly do we mean by the word democracy? What are some of the definitions of that political scientists and practitioners have used over the years? What are some of the normative and empirical implications of the common definitions of the term?

... What are the empirical conditions that tend to support or undermine democratic regimes? How did these forces operate in historical cases? What is the portent of such considerations for present democratic governments?

... What is the likely future of democracy in an interdependent and disorderly world?

The readings for the course are a sample of the best recent and classical work on democracy and democratization. The readings will not answer our questions, but they will allow us to see the outlines of present speculations on democracies.

Your work in this course will require the use of different perspectives and creative thinking. In the end, it should help you acquire the skills to use the knowledge you have acquired to synthesize information and analyze political events.

**Course Requirements**

**Assignments**

This is a *seminar* course. Seminars entail a new form of education for most of you. So what distinguishes a seminar from a usual lecture or laboratory course?

... *PARTICIPATION*;

... *COOPERATION*;

... *CRITICAL READING* (I define this elsewhere!!);

... *LEADERSHIP*; or, to put it short,

... *SCHOLARLY COMMITMENT*

I have formulated the requirements for the course accordingly. *First*, each of you will *co-lead* two class meetings. (For some guidelines, see Appendix 1 of this syllabus.) This co-leadership (I’m the other co, of course) and your overall class participation will be 25% of your course grade. *Second*, you must complete a *major research paper* on some aspect of democracy that interests you and that I find acceptable. You must follow the guidelines in Appendix 2 below and in this syllabus. The paper will constitute 50% of your course grade. *Third*, there will be a *final take-home examination* in the course. The final examination will be *integrative*; that is, it will call on you to use the knowledge you
should have gained from the course to address a new question. The final examination will count for 25% of your final grade.

In addition, each of you will be responsible for submitting a weekly essay concerning the work assigned for each week. These essays should be no more than two (that’s 2) typewritten pages in length and will be due on MONDAY of each week at 12:00am. Essays can be in several different forms: responses to questions that occur to you while reading, critiques of arguments made by authors, applications of concepts to current public issues ... the number of possibilities is very great. These essays will be graded on a pass/fail basis, but failing to hand in an essay each week will decrease your course grade by a step (B to C and so on) for each essay missed. On the other hand, you do not have to turn in an essay for the weeks you co-lead a class or for the session where papers will be presented.

Dates to Remember

Weekly Essays Due Every Monday at 12:00am
Research Questions and Preliminary Bibliography March 1
Research Design March 29
Initial Poster Presentations April 28
Research Poster Presentations April 30
Research Paper May 3
Panel Presentations May 5
Final Examination Distributed May 5
Final Examination Due May 11 at 3:00 pm

Attendance

I will take attendance at each class. Since this is a class that will only meet once a week (usually) and demands participation to work, you will be allowed one (that’s 1) unexcused absence. Any more will result in instant withdrawal from the course (either a “W” or “WF”, depending). Further, you cannot miss class on a day you are slated to co-lead. Since this course is required for graduation with a political science major, I would seriously advise you not to test me on this one! Lateness and lack of preparation will not be tolerated either.
Course Outline

The course will follow the outline below, with each section approximating a week’s work. I will make every effort to stick to this schedule, but if revisions are required I will inform you before hand. If we must reschedule any aspect of this syllabus, you and your classmates will be consulted.

1. Introduction (Feb 1)

2. What Democracy Is ... and Isn’t (Feb 10)

3. Preconceptions about Democracy (Feb 17)
   I’ll distribute these to class on Feb 10.

4. How We Got From There to Here and Stops in Between (Feb 24)
   Reinhardt Bendix. Kings or People. Chapters 1, 2, 6 - 10, 14.

5. Research question(s) and preliminary research bibliography due Mar 1. Individual meetings Mar 3.

5. Democracy, Participation, and Power (Mar 10)

6. Democracy and Governance (Mar 17)

7. The Failure of Democracy (Mar 24)


9. Experience In the New Democracies (Apr 14)
You can reference all of these articles through Galileo; most of them are available through JSTOR. I’d include the URLs, but they change so often, what’s the point?

8. Individual meetings on research project Apr 19, 21. *All students must schedule a meeting for these dates*. Initial presentations of posters Apr 28.

APPENDIX 1
CO-LEADING A SEMINAR

What better way to show that you have gotten a liberal arts education than to make your teacher dispensable! You can (believe it) teach yourself and others about a new topic. The following are some reminders about how to do it.

1. Critical reading, along with its brother, critical thinking, have become buzz words throughout American education. As is often the case, this is a fancy term for a set of simple ideas. To read a book or article critically, you must answer a series of questions:
   ... What is the author’s purpose? What goals does he or she want to achieve?
   ... What means does the author select to accomplish his or her goals? (Why does Plato use dramatic dialogues, for instance?)
   ... What body of literature or belief does the author attack or support? On what grounds?
   ... What hypotheses or arguments are advanced?
   ... What is the most important evidence for the main argument?
   ... What subarguments contribute to the main argument? Is there sound evidence supporting them as well?
   ... What problems does a critique of the book reveal? Are there shortcomings, logical errors, misused or faulty arguments?
   ... Did reading this book lead you to any new insights? What were they?

2. Keeping these ideas in mind, read the book and papers you were assigned.

3. At least two class days before your session (i.e. Friday), meet with me and be prepared to discuss how we should lead the seminar. Seminars are cooperative, not competitive; you will be evaluated on how well you help the others to understand the materials. To that end, keep this in mind:

   ... What are the most important points these materials make? What do I want my fellow students to get out of them?
... What would the best method be for getting these points across? Lecturing is out; but
given that, what questions, tactics, methods, dirty tricks, etc. should we use? Also, how
are you going to get everyone to say at least one thing at your session?
... How can we get seminar members to bring out the relevant ideas they have learned
from other courses? The whole point is to get you to bring the substantive and theoreti-
cal knowledge you have acquired to bear on a set of serious questions.
... You must be prepared to summarize the most important points you wanted to empha-
size. Of course, you must be ready to address any disagreements as well.
I will give you my assessment of your performance after each session, based on a short
evaluation form. I will also ask your fellow students to give us a paragraph or so of their
own thoughts for us to mull over. And, please pay heed to ...

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SEMINARS
(with apologies to Dr. Timothy O’Neill of Southwestern University)

1. THOU SHALT NOT B.S.
Saying “I don’t know” is infinitely preferable to bluffing.

2. THOU SHALT NOT ATTACK THE AUTHOR OR SPEAKER
Saying, for instance, that Marx was sexist (so near as we can tell he was) doesn’t tell us
much about the validity of his ideas. It might be illuminating if combined with other in-
formation, but it is no excuse to dismiss his work.

3. THOU SHALT NOT PLEAD TO COMMON KNOWLEDGE
“We all know that ...” any sentence that begins like this won’t tell us much about the va-
lidity of a position.

4. THOU SHALT SPEAK UP AT LEAST ONCE IN EVERY SESSION

5. THOU SHALT READ THE ASSIGNED MATERIAL
This doesn’t mean you can’t use other sources that summarize a difficult position, but you have to be prepared to support your assertions.

6. THOU SHALT TEACH

7. THOU SHALT NOT PLAGIARIZE

8. THOU SHALT TAKE RISKS
This is your chance to try all the ideas you must have had while we were droning away at you all these years! Try the techniques and ideas that helped you learn the best in the past.

9. THOU SHALT HONOR THY PEERS
Learn to respect their strengths and tolerate their failings.

10. THOU SHALT SHUT UP WHEN THOU HAST NOTHING ELSE TO SAY
I saved the hardest one for last.
APPENDIX 2

GUIDE TO WRITING YOUR RESEARCH PAPER
(with apologies to Dr. Charles Brake of James Madison University)

You will have to follow the guidelines and timetable below to get your paper done with full credit.

This semester you will do a research project involving a major paper concerning some aspect of democracy. In other words, you will design and carry out a study to build an answer to a research question you have chosen. The only constraints on the projects are that the question has to do with democracy and must involve examination of a causal question (that is, why do things work out as they do?). As you can see below, you will get plenty of chances to discuss your projects with me. And with each other, of course.

Research Question & Preliminary Bibliography: DUE Monday Mar 1 at 2:50pm

Put your name and your research question(s) at the top of the first page. Then list at least 20 works related to that question (including at least 5 academic books and at least 15 journal articles). All of these works must be cited using the APSA style. Don’t even think about turning in a bibliography using another format. This is a pass/fail assignment. However, a failing grade will result in a 5% penalty on the final research project grade. By the way, you are not required to have read any (or all!) of these works; this is just to kick-start the project.

Individual Meetings regarding the Research Project: Wednesday Mar 3 and Friday March 5

All students must meet with me to discuss their research projects. Be prepared to discuss 3 main questions:

1. What got you interested in this issue area and what’s interesting about it?
2. What is the dependent variable for your project (and how does it vary)?
3. Do you have any particular country(ies) that you plan to include in your project (and, of course, why did you pick them)? (NB: the reasons you wish to include cases has to be related to the dependent variable you are going to discuss.)

Research Design: DUE Monday Mar 29 at 2:50pm.

You will need to submit a printed copy and send me an electronic copy by this date. The research design will cover items 1 through 4 below. The research design will be graded
and will count as 20% of your final grade. In preparing the research design, feel free to use any of the designs of the books and papers we have reviewed during the seminar. This is no time to get too original!

1. Statement of the purpose of the research (1 - 2pp):

This is where you have to answer the always important, “So what?” question. That is, what are the issues examined in this project and why are they worth studying? Providing specific data or examples to flesh out your description of the issue can really help here. In the final paragraph of this section, tell the reader what the dependent variable is and define it.

2. Literature review (4 - 8pp):

In this section your will discuss what previous work has to say about your dependent variable. Your literature review must cite at least 7 academic journal articles and 1 book. Your most important job here is identifying the most important independent variables cited in these works and why are they important. In presenting each independent variable, discuss the hypothesis at issue, the theoretical justification(s) for the relationship, and any empirical evidence that suggests that this relationship exists. At the end of this review of past research, discuss any more potential independent variables that were not treated in the works you read. (Hint: these would be the explanatory variables in your hypotheses.) If you are doing a qualitative paper this is where you would review the literature that led you to the causal mechanisms you are using.

3. Main hypothesis statement(s) and justification (1 pg):

What main hypothesis(es) will your research project examine? What theory(ies) justify this main hypothesis? (Don’t go all War and Peace on this; simpler statements are always better.) If you are doing a qualitative paper this is where you would present a preliminary description of the causal mechanisms you are postulating.

4. Research design (1 - 2pp):

What is the unit of analysis of your dependent variable? In other words, is it a property of countries or of associations or of individual human beings? What is (are) the time period(s) will you examine? What case(s) or datasets will you examine as examples of your topic of interest? What aspects of your case(s) or datasets have you chosen as relevant to testing your hypothesis(es) (i.e. what are the indicators you are going to look at)? Finally, how are you planning to analyze your data? (NB: As an appendix to the research design, attach a new preliminary bibliography with 10 relevant books and 20 journal articles.) If you are doing a qualitative paper this is where you would justify the cases you selected.

Individual meetings regarding your research design: Mar 31 and Apr 2
All of you must see me to discuss your research design during this period. This will be our main opportunity to spot problems and possible difficulties early on. I’ll tell you what I think about what you’ve proposed and you can get all those forebodings you will no doubt have off your chest. It would be best if you didn’t come in and say, “I’m lost” or something similarly unhelpful. Think about the questions you have about your problem and how you are approaching it.

Individual Meetings regarding the Research Project: Apr 19, 21

All of you must see me to discuss your papers during this period. Having problems that we didn’t identify when we discussed your research design? Here’s your opportunity to discuss them with me. NB: if you find yourself in difficulties, don’t wait until this late to tell me about them! This is for cleaning up the last obstacles, not rethinking the project.

Initial Poster Presentation: Apr 28

Research Poster Presentation: Apr 30

Research Project: Due May 3 at 2:50pm

You will need to submit a printed copy and send me an electronic copy by this date. Your final paper will include all six elements listed below in the assignment, suitably revised as your work subsequent to your research design has indicated. I will also want a poster for your work that can be displayed at Honors Day. It should meet the standards I presented on April

You will notice that I haven’t placed a page number requirement on the paper or on its components, as I did for your research designs. I would guess that with the extra work you have done since the design was turned in and the additional sections included here that a minimum of 20 - 25 pages (that’s without bibliography and tables, figures, ect.) would be necessary for you to complete a reasonable project. But that depends to some extent on your research topic and methods. Quantitative papers, for which three cheers, might be shorter, though they will usually involve a lot more work to get to the finished product. As I always say: if you have done the work, your real problem is to keep the paper at a reasonable length.

Remember to handle your source materials carefully. Provide APSA style citations for primary and secondary materials. Cite other authors when presenting their views (and the relevant page number when directly quoting them). This not only gives them credit, it also allows you to take proper credit for your insights.

In your final paper, you must cite a minimum of 20 different sources. At least 15 sources must be articles in academic journals and an additional 5 sources cited must be books.
Periodicals that are NOT peer-reviewed (newspapers, newsmagazines, most internet sites, etc.) are NOT academic journal articles. You can, of course, cite news stories as supporting evidence, but such citations will not count toward your 20 source minimum. You must provide a complete bibliography of works cited in APSA style at the end of the paper.

Your research project must contain the following elements in the following order (you’ll find the first four familiar):

1. Statement of the purpose of the research:

   This is where you have to answer the always important, “So what?” question. That is, what are the issues examined in this project and why are they worth studying? Providing specific data or examples to flesh out your description of the issue can really help here. In the final paragraph of this section, tell the reader what the dependent variable is and define it.

2. Literature review:

   In this section you will discuss what previous work has to say about your dependent variable. Your literature review must cite at least 7 academic journal articles and 1 book. (Usually this is where you would cite most of the works in your bibliography; this is the bare minimum.) Your most important job here is identifying the most important independent variables cited in these works and why are they important. In presenting each independent variable, discuss the hypothesis at issue, the theoretical justification(s) for the relationship, and any empirical evidence that suggests that this relationship exists. At the end of this review of past research, discuss any more potential independent variables that were not treated in the works you read. (Hint: these would be the explanatory variables in your hypotheses.)

3. Main hypothesis statement(s) and justification:

   What main hypothesis(es) will your research project examine? What theory(ies) justify this main hypothesis? (Here you would usually extend your discussion somewhat from the design.) If you are doing a qualitative paper this is where you would describe the causal mechanisms you are postulating.

4. Research design:

   What is the unit of analysis of your dependent variable? In other words, is it a property of countries or of associations or of individual human beings? What is (are) the time period(s) will you examine? What case(s) or datasets will you examine as examples of your topic of interest? What aspects of your case(s) or datasets have you chosen as relevant to testing your hypothesis(es) (i.e. what are the indicators you are going to look at)? Finally,
how are you planning to *analyze* your data? (Again, this will probably take more then any 1 - 2 pages by now.) If you are doing a qualitative paper, this is where you would using the cases you have chosen.

5. Empirical analysis:

Provide a detailed, narrative analysis of your hypothesis(es). Beginning with your main independent variable, examine the relationship between each of your independent variables and the dependent variable. This means you have to throughly explain what you found out about the hypothesized relationships. If you are doing a qualitative paper this is where you would produce evidence of the causal mechanisms you are postulating. Usually, this is where you will put any tables and figures of supporting evidence.

6. Conclusion:

Here you’ll need to answer three main questions:

1. Based on your empirical analysis, what can we conclude about your main hypothesis and why? (It’s always best at this point to remind readers of what that hypothesis is, how you tested for it, and what you found out. A lot of your future readers will only look at the beginning and conclusions of your paper. Always write like that is what is going to happened this time.)

2. Based on your empirical analysis, what can we conclude about any alternative hypotheses and why? (I.e. do your findings cast doubt on anyone else’s? How and, if you think you know, why?)

3. What are the implications if your main hypothesis is confirmed by subsequent research? (There should be some if your subject is interesting.)