

POLI 473 – DEMOCRACY AND THE MARKET
Winter 2024
MW 2:35-3:55 p.m.

Instructor: Brendan Szendrő, PhD

Email: brendan.szendro@gmail.com

Office hours: Tuesday, 2-4 pm.

Office: 26-4, 3610 Rue McTavish

Why, in the age of globalization, has democracy faltered? At the end of the Cold War, politicians, scholars, and all manner of observers in between looked to Eastern Europe for a newfound wave of democratization; two decades later, as the Arab Spring erupted across the Middle East-North Africa, those same observers held their breath. Yet in each case, democracy has met unanticipated stumbling blocks. The prevalence of democratic backsliding across these regions has led to a dour, pessimistic view about the prospects for democracy as a whole. A burgeoning “democratic disconnect” – bolstered by rising income inequality – has emerged throughout the democratic world (Foa and Mounk 2016).

In this course, we will discuss the role of the free market and civil society in shaping prospects for democracy. We’ll tackle the influence of individual wealth, transnational economic ties, and independent civil institutions including religion, media and academia. I will offer a thesis statement – that government, civil society, and independent wealth must all balance each other’s influence in order to secure democracy – and we will dissect this claim for better or for worse. Each of you will have the chance to present your own thesis statements in this regard.

AIMS AND SCOPE

In this course, we will examine the relationship between government, civil society, and market forces. At the heart of this issue lies the question of minimal liberalism – the point at which one person’s rights infringe upon another’s. In order for democracy to succeed, civil society must be able to organize independently of government. But what if civil society seeks illiberal demands? And if the ability to freely spend money is a key part of civil autonomy, how can you preserve democracy while preventing wealth from gaining too much influence? If government regulates both civil society and the economy in order to prevent illiberalism, is it still democratic?

During the first section of this course, we will engage with a plethora of theoretical and comparative sources. As the course progresses, however, we will increasingly focus on two specific regions that have struggled with democratization in the post-Cold War era: Eastern Europe, and the Middle East-North Africa. In both cases, we will highlight the role of religion and media in civil society, as well as the role of market forces in shaping both democracy and democratic backsliding. The intersection of social, economic, and political interests in these regions challenges dualistic viewpoints such as those by Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) or Boix (2016) that focus on the relationship between government and civil society, on the one hand, or government and economy, on the other.

Both Eastern Europe and the Middle East-North Africa have been historically undemocratic, and both regions have a history of communist or military repression of civil society. Although Eastern Europe began to democratize during the 1990s, it has since faltered and stumbled into democratic backsliding; and although the MENA region has at times experienced democratic movements, its flirtations with democracy have often given way to military and populist regimes. And while religion plays a crucial role in both regions, few Eastern Europeans attend church, while service attendance in the MENA region remains high. What, then, do these regions have in common?

The phenomena we will discuss are by no means limited to Eastern Europe and the MENA region! In fact, previous versions of this class focused on Latin America, and there's a lot of interesting material regarding these subjects in every corner of the globe. For the purpose of this class, though, it helps to focus in on particular regions so we're not jumping all over the place. You could pick any country in the world and analyze the clash between market forces, governments, and civil society – this is just a sample.

GRADING CRITERIA

Grades for the course will be based on four papers – two shorter, two longer – and participation. In the final paper, you will pick one country of interest and argue a thesis statement regarding the role of the free market and civil society in democratization and democratic backsliding.

Directions

- Papers will be in response to an assigned prompt. The structure of the papers is flexible and subject to your personal interpretation of the prompt.
- Please follow this format for the papers: print a physical copy, with your name printed on a separate page at the end. Use size 12 Times New Roman font, double-spaced with no spaces between paragraphs. By following this format, you can help the blind grading process.
- Participation can be fulfilled not only through in-class speech but also personal communications such as office hours. If you have a proposal for an alternative form of participation, this may be accepted as well.

Hint: some of the things I look for in papers

- Quality/clarity of writing
- Strength of argument
- Understanding of course material
- Originality/creativity

This list is not exhaustive, nor are the scores determined by a rubric. In other words, there aren't a minimum or maximum of points you can gain or lose in each category. There may be cases, for example, in which the argument is strong enough that it makes up for weakness in the quality of writing, or vice versa. There may also be other items that alter the balance of the score.

Breakdown and Due Dates

- Short Paper #1: 20%
3-5 pages
Due February 2
- Midterm Paper: 25%
5-10 pages
Due March 7
- Short Paper #2: 20%
3-5 pages
Due April 4
- Final Paper: 25%
10-15 pages
Due April 25
- Participation: 10%

OTHER INFO

- I am frequently inundated with emails, so if you email me and don't hear back, visit my office!
- Recordings of the lectures will be available upon request, but you have to send me an email!
- I will be unavailable to answer emails Friday evenings and Saturdays
- If you have any questions, ask!

READING SCHEDULE

Readings for this course are divided into "priority reading" and "additional resources." You have no obligation to read all of them! I suggest reading abstracts/summaries of each and then picking 1-2 to read all the way through. In class, we'll discuss how the readings fit together. Most readings will be available either online or from the McGill virtual library. In some cases, I'll upload book excerpts or articles that are particularly hard to find.

Theorizing Civil Society, Part I: January 8, 10

Priority reading:

- Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2019. *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 1-73.
- Boix, Carles. 2015. *Political Order and Inequality: Their Foundations and Their Consequences for Human Warfare*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 22-89.
- Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 3-65.
- Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *The American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567-576.

Additional resources:

- Ahmed, Amel. 2013. *Democracy and the Politics of Electoral System Choice*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press: 1-88.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 1976, 11-53; 123-157; 305-340
- Moore Jr., Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. New York, NY: Beacon Press, 413-483.

Theorizing Civil Society, Part II – January 15, 17

Priority reading:

- Przeworski, Adam. 1991. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Democratic Backsliding – January 22, 24

Priority reading:

- Bennett, Andrew and Didem Seyis. 2021. “The Online Market’s Invisible Hand: Internet Media and Rising Populism.” *Political Studies*. Published Online.
- Foa, Roberto Stefan and Yascha Mounk. 2016. “The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect.” *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): 5-17.
- Haggard, Stephen and Robert Kaufman. 2021. “Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy*, 32(4): pp. 27-41.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. *Excerpts Available on MyCourses*.

Additional resources:

- Karakoc, Ekrem. 2018. *Inequality After the Transition: Political Parties, Party Systems, and Social Policy in Southern and Postcommunist Europe*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Katz, Richard S. and Peter Mair. 2009. “The Cartel Party Thesis: A Restatement.” *Perspectives on Politics* 7(4): 753-756.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2019. *Crisis of Democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Yishai, Yael. 2001. “Bringing society back in: Post-cartel parties in Israel.” *Party Politics* 7(6): 667-687.

Eastern Europe – January 29, 31, February 5, 7

Priority reading:

- Bennett, W Lance and Steven Livingston. 2018. “The Disinformation Order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions.” *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2): 122-139.

- Bozóki, András and Dániel Hegedűs. 2018. "An externally constrained hybrid regime: Hungary in the European Union." *Democratization* 25(7): 1173-1189.
- Guriev, Sergei and Andrei Rachinsky. 2005. "The Role of Oligarchs in Russian Capitalism." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19(1): 131-150.
- Halmai, Gábor. 2020. "Rights Revolution and Counter-Revolution: Democratic Backsliding and Human Rights in Hungary." *Law & Ethics of Human Rights*, 14(1): 97-123.

Additional resources:

- Art, David. 2022. "The Myth of Global Populism." *Perspectives on Politics* 20(3): 999-1011.
- Enyedi, Zsolt. 2018. "Democratic Backsliding and Academic Freedom in Hungary." *Perspectives on Politics* 16(4): 1067-1074.
- Hutcheson, Derek S. and Ian McAllister. 2021. "Consolidating the Putin Regime: the 2020 Referendum on Russia's Constitutional Amendments." *Russian Politics*, 6: 355-376.
- Pleines, Heiko. 2016. "Oligarchs and Politics in Ukraine." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 24(1): 105-127.
- Robertson, Graeme B. 2007. "Strikes and Labor Organization in Hybrid Regimes." *American Political Science Review*, 101(4): 781-798.

Middle East-North Africa – February 12, 14, 19, 21

Priority reading:

- Blaydes Lisa. 2017. "State Building in the Middle East." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20: 487-504.
- Colgan, Jeff D. 2013. "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War." *International Security*, 38(2): 147-180.
- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. *Excerpt available on MyCourses*.
- Hinnebusch, Raymond. 2006. "Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory, and the Middle East: An overview and Critique." *Democratization*, 13(3): 373-395.

Additional resources:

- Haider, Aliya. 2002. "The Rhetoric of Resistance: Islamism, Modernity, and Globalization." *Harvard Blackletter Law Journal*, 18: pp. 91-128.
- Mazrui, Ali A. 1998. "Globalization, Islam, and the West: Between Homogenization and Hegemonization." *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 15(3): pp. 1-13.

The Role of Neoliberalism – February 26, 28

Priority reading:

- Fukuyama, Francis. 2001. "Social capital, civil society and development." *Third World Quarterly*, 22(1): 7-20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3993342>.

- Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press. *Excerpts available on MyCourses*.
- Morreau, Michael. 2019. "Arrow's Theorem," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arrows-theorem/> – see also the following explainers from Youtube: "Is Democracy Impossible? (Arrow's Theorem)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q60ZXoXP6Hg&t=532s&ab_channel=UndefinedBehavior ; "The Mathematical Danger of Democratic Voting" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goQ4ii-zBMw&t=418s&ab_channel=SpanningTree
- Broz, J. Lawrence, Jeffry Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth. 2021. "Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash." *International Organization*, 75: 464-494.

Additional resources:

Philosophy of Backlash – March 11, 13

Priority reading:

- Barber, Benjamin. 1992. "Jihad vs. McWorld." *The Atlantic*, March 1992.
- Deneen, Patrick J. 2018. *Why Liberalism Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. *Excerpts Available on MyCourses*.
- Stolle, Dietlind. 1998. "Bowling together, bowling alone: The development of generalized trust in voluntary associations." *Political Psychology*, 19(3): pp. 497-525.

Additional resources:

- Hochschild, Joshua P. 2002. "The Principle of Subsidiarity and the Agrarian Ideal." *Faith & Reason*, 27(2, 3, 4): pp. 1-20.
- Hochschild, Joshua P. 2006. "Globalization: Ancient and Modern." *Intercollegiate Review*, 41(1): pp. 40-48.
- Stolle, Dietlind and Thomas R. Rochon. 1998. "Are all associations alike? Member diversity, associational type, and the creation of social capital." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(1): 47-65.

Religion and Neoliberalism in Eastern Europe – March 18, 20

Priority reading:

- Lamour, Christian. 2022. "Orbán *Urbi et Orbi*: Christianity as a Nodal Point of Radical-right Populism." *Politics and Religion* 15(2): 317-343.
- Minarik, Pavol. 2022. "From the Communists and Post-Communists Alike: State-Paid Salaries of the Clergy in Czech Lands 1949-2012." *Politics and Religion* 15(2): 374-387.
- Shakhanova, Gaziza and Petr Kratochvíl. 2022. "The Patriotic Turn in Russia: Political Convergence of the Russian Orthodox Church and State?" *Politics and Religion* 15(1): 114-141.
- Stepan, Alfred. 2000. "Religion, democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations.'" *Journal of democracy*, 11(4): 37-57.

Additional resources:

- Iannaccone, Laurence R. 1992. "Religious Markets and the Economics of Religion." *Social Compass* 39(1): 123-131.
- Köksal, Pinar, Aysegül Aydingün, and Hazar Ege Gürsoy. 2019. "Religious Revival and Deprivitization in Post-Soviet Georgia: Reculturation of Orthodox Christianity and Deculturation of Islam." *Politics and Religion* 12(2): 317-345.
- Stolz, Jörg, Detlef Pollack, Nan Dirk De Graaf, and Jean-Philippe Antonietti. 2020. "Losing My Religion as a Natural Experiment: How State Pressure and Taxes Led to Church Disaffiliations between 1940 and 2010 in Germany." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 60(1): 83-102.

Religion and Neoliberalism in the Middle East-North Africa – March 25, 27

Priority reading:

- Ben Lazreg, Houssein. 2021. "Post-Islamism in Tunisia and Egypt: Contradictory Trajectories." *Religions* 12: 408-430.
- Kirdis, Esen. 2020. "Uncertainty and the Religious Market: The Unexpected Rise of Salafism in Egypt and Tunisia after the Arab Spring." *Journal of Church and State* 63(1): 23-46.
- Mhanje, Anwar and Rasmus Brandt. 2021. "Rights, Democracy, and Islamist Women's Activism in Tunisia and Egypt." *Politics and Religion* 14(4): 577-608.

Additional resources

- Akbaba, Yasemin and Jonathan Fox. 2019. "Societal Rather than Governmental Change: Religious Discrimination in Muslim-Majority Countries after the Arab Uprisings." *All Azimuth*, 8(1): pp. 5-22.
- Al-Anani, Khalil. 2020. "Devout Neoliberalism?! Explaining Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood's Socio-economic Perspective and Policies." *Politics and Religion* 13(4): 748-767.
- Ben Salem, Maryam. 2020. "'God loves the rich.' The Economic Policy of Ennahda: Liberalism in the Service of Social Solidarity." *Politics and Religion* 13(4): 695-718.

The Economics of Dictatorship and Democracy – April 1, 3, 8, 10

Priority reading:

- Fukuyama, Francis. 2022. *Liberalism and Its Discontents*. London, UK: Profile Books. *Excerpts available on MyCourses*.
- Piketty, Thomas. 2019. *Capital and Ideology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. *Excerpts available on MyCourses*.
- Svoboda, Milan W. 2020. "When Polarization Trumps Civic Virtue: Partisan Conflict and the Subversion of Democracy by Incumbents." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, pp. 15:3-31.

LANGUAGE OF SUBMISSION

In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à [la Charte des droits de l'étudiant](#) de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#) (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon [le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et procédures disciplinaires](#) » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#).)