STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
Department of Political Science

Seminar on the Political Economy of Democratization POS 551
Professor Erik P. Hoffmann Fall 2008

REQUIRED TEXTS (All paperbacks except Diamond, Reich, and Acemoglu/Robinson)
L. Diamond, THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY: THE STRUGGLE TO BUILD FREE
C. Lindblom, THE MARKET SYSTEM: WHAT IT IS, HOW IT WORKS, AND WHAT TO
MAKE OF IT, Yale, 2002.
R. Reich, SUPERCAPITALISM: THE TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS, DEMOCRACY,
Y. Feng, DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE, AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE: THEORY
D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson, ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF DICTATORSHIP AND

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS (All articles on ERes: code 364, and all books at Mary Jane’s)

8/26 Introduction
The goals, contents, and requirements of this seminar (see IMPORTANT NOTES, p. 3)
will be discussed; student expectations, suggestions, and questions will be voiced;
and significant theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues will be raised.

9/2 Democracy and Democratization: Concepts and Definitions (of Analysts and Actors)
Dahl, Shapiro, and Cheibub (hereafter DSC), Introduction, Part 1, and Appendix (pp. ix-
53 and 527-534).
Tilly, Preface and Chapter 1
L. Whitehead, “On ‘Democracy’ and ‘Democratization,’” in DEMOCRATIZATION:

Democracy and Democratization: Origins and History (Roots and Development)
S. Finer, “Trajectory without Teleology: Inventions and Dead-Ends,” in THE HISTORY
Tilly, Chapter 2.
311-338.
R. Dahl, “What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?” in ON

Start doing some hard thinking about the following question:
For the emergence of a viable democracy (successful democratization), is
there a universally or usually desirable sequencing or prioritizing of the following
variables? If so, why? If not, why not?
National identity
State capacity
Rule of law
Civil society
Market economy
Political rights
Civil liberties

9/9 Democracy and Democratization: Sources and Effects (Causes and Consequences)
DSC, Parts 2 and 8.
Start doing some hard thinking about the following question:
Which of the following variables are the most important sources and effects of a viable democracy? Why? (View all of these variables as processes or conditions and as both independent and dependent variables.)

Divided powers
Inclusive policymaking
Accountable government
Government performance
Economic development
Distributive justice
Protection of minorities
Civilian control of the military
Separation of church/temple/mosque and state
Civic culture
International support
Other variables?

9/16 Tilly’s Theory of Democracy, Democratization, and De-democratization
Tilly, Chapters 3-8.

9/23 Eckstein’s Theory of Democracy, Democratization, and Government Performance

9/30 Democracy and Democratization: Culture, Society, Economics, Constitutionalism, Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Representation, Interest Groups, and the Global Order
NO CLASS, but read DSC, Parts 3-7 and 9.
10/7 Three Theoretical Frameworks

10/14 A World Partially Democratized  

10/21 The Prospects for Global Democracy and the Path to Democratic Renewal  
Diamond, Chapters 8-15 and Appendix.

10/28 Market Systems  
Lindblom, entire book.  

11/4 Supercapitalism and Democracy  
Reich, Introduction and Chapters 1-6.

11/11 Democracy, Governance, and Economic Performance  
Feng, Preface, Chapters 1-12, and Appendixes.  

11/18 Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (1)  
Acemoglu and Robinson, Preface and Chapters 1-5.

11/25 Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (2)  
Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 6-12.

12/2 Presentation of Students’ Draft Papers and Propositional Inventories for Feedback from the Instructor and Other Students  
No additional readings.

12/9 Submission of Students’ Final Papers and Propositional Inventories  
NO CLASS (submit papers and inventories by Microsoft Word email).  
NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED (unless you have a medical, personal, or family emergency and notify the instructor before 12/9).
SEMINAR OBJECTIVES, CONTENTS, AND REQUIREMENTS: This seminar addresses fundamental issues concerning the actual and desirable relationships between political authority and corporate power in modern liberal democracies. We will focus on the emergence of democracies and markets and on the reciprocal influences of these processes since the mid-1970s. We will identify and weigh the structural and cultural legacies, political and social institutions, and domestic and foreign policies that strengthen or weaken democratic and capitalist orders. We will view democratization and marketization as the products of consensual politics or the byproducts of contentious politics. We will scrutinize the core elements of a civil society, civil economy, and civic culture. And we will analyze the political sources and effects of globalization, privatization, nationalization, and corruption as well as the complementarities and trade-offs among public goods, distributive justice, entrepreneurial incentives, and property rights.

The purpose of this seminar is to broaden and deepen students’ understanding of basic issues in comparative political economy and to develop and inform students’ views on these issues. We will address major theoretical, methodological, normative, and practical questions about viable democracies and markets as well as democratic and capitalist transitions from authoritarian and totalitarian polities and command and control economies. We will assess numerous concepts and theories of “democracy,” “democratization,” “de-democratization,” “pseudodemocracy,” “capitalism,” “socialism,” “marketization,” and “regulation.” We will identify and compare the sources (causes), elements (contents), conditions (contexts), and effects (consequences) of democratic and authoritarian governance and the various types and combinations of democratic and authoritarian polities and free-market and welfare-state economies. We will focus on the political-administrative, socioeconomic, and cultural-ideological factors that facilitate or impede democratic and capitalist development. We will try to explain why some democratic and capitalist experiments have flourished while others have floundered or failed. We will examine both domestic and international politics and economics and their linkages in a changing world economy. And four of political science’s main subfields—comparative politics, international relations, public policy, and political theory—and three of political science’s cognate disciplines—economics, sociology, and history—will make major contributions to our work.

The instructor will identify many ways to contribute to and benefit from this seminar. For example, students are strongly urged to read THE ECONOMIST on a weekly basis, paying close attention to its explanations and descriptions of current trends and events in the global political economy and in the political economies of multistate blocs, individual states, subnational regions, and localities. Also, students are encouraged to read pertinent articles in major professional journals (e.g., WORLD POLITICS, COMPARATIVE POLITICS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, and JOURNAL OF DEMOCRACY) and newspapers (e.g., WASHINGTON POST, NEW YORK TIMES, FINANCIAL TIMES, and WALL STREET JOURNAL). And students are invited to report in class on unassigned books and articles (e.g., from one’s M.A. or Ph.D. thesis research and other graduate courses).

The instructor’s chief expectation is that students do some hard thinking about the interactions between state and society, government and business, democracy and capitalism, and democratization and marketization. Students will be expected to do all of the assigned readings, with special attention to glossaries, maps, tables, and figures. Students will be encouraged—indeed, compelled—to master basic factual information, to engage diverse views on contentious intellectual and practical issues, and to formulate, articulate, defend, and document their own
views on these issues. The instructor’s aim is to develop students’ analytical and interpretive skills as well as their substantive knowledge and know-how.

The bulk of this seminar will be devoted to general readings with distinctive theoretical orientations and detailed case studies, many of which will be very helpful in the preparation of your seminar paper. This paper is to be a sizable (at least 30 double-spaced, numbered, and typewritten pages) review essay on the assigned readings or a research project on a subject chosen by the student and approved by the instructor. This paper must include your analysis of contentious issues raised in our seminar—with evaluation of ideas and evidence from all of the books, most articles, and many seminar discussions. Be sure to include the most important substantive conclusions you have drawn from this course as well as your assessment of major concepts and theories and arguments and explanations. Outlines of student papers must be discussed with the instructor and may be presented in the seminar before completion. Final papers will be graded by three sets of criteria: the theoretical and practical significance of the issues raised; the creativity and cogency of the explanations and arguments developed; and the quality and quantity of the evidence presented to corroborate one’s views.

Students will compile an inventory of core concepts and propositions about comparative political economy. Compile this inventory gradually throughout the semester, noting each week 3-4 concepts and propositions from the assigned books and articles and perhaps 1-2 original propositions of your own or of a classmate. These concepts are to be clearly defined, and these propositions are to be bi-variate or multivariate generalizations or hypotheses about linkages between politics and economics. And propositions on similar issues or related subjects should be clustered to form part of a theory or theoretical framework. The purpose of this exercise is to enhance your cumulative knowledge and to stimulate more creative and cogent analytical essays and research papers.

All students will present oral analyses of assigned readings in each and every seminar session. Use this opportunity to sharpen your analysis of the assigned readings and to elicit feedback from an interested but not necessarily like-minded audience. Be sure to contrast and evaluate the core concepts and explicit and implicit theories in the assigned books and articles.

The major paper and class participation each will count about 50% of a student’s final grade. There will be no examinations.

The Field Seminar in Comparative Politics (POS 550) is a strongly recommended foundation for this seminar but is not a formal prerequisite.

Regular attendance is expected and essential to benefit from and contribute to this seminar. Thoughtful observations and questions in class will greatly increase one’s ability to analyze the complex and interrelated issues raised.

Students are requested to email or phone the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class and make their assigned presentations. Nonetheless, students will be expected to incorporate into their written work key information presented and discussed in all classes.

Keeping up with the reading on a weekly basis is absolutely essential. Your informed and active class participation (be it strong criticism or praise of the assigned readings and of your instructor’s and classmates’ viewpoints) will be a major factor determining whether this seminar sinks or swims.

On plagiarism and its disciplinary consequences, read and heed the UAlbany publication “Community Rights and Responsibilities, 2007-2010,” including the relevant appendixes.

It will be a very firm policy not to give “Incompletes” in this course (except for the circumstances described in week 12/9 above).

All required texts should be purchased from Mary Jane’s or elsewhere as soon as possible. Mary Jane’s returns unsold books to the publishers well before the semester ends.
necessary, split the considerable expense with a classmate or classmates. But remember that the instructor has carefully chosen books he thinks will be valuable tools of your trade, especially for students who plan to do further research and teaching in comparative politics and international relations.

The instructor’s e-mail is eph@albany.edu and his office hours are: Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30 (downtown); Thursdays, 1:00-2:30 (uptown); and by appointment. The uptown office is the Rockefeller College contact office, Humanities 016 (call 442-3112 for an appointment); the downtown office is Richardson 284 (442-5376). If you cannot visit or call during these hours, talk to the instructor before or after class and arrange a mutually convenient time to get together—quite possibly over coffee or lunch. No calls at home, please.