

POL 3530A: Democracy, Development, and Violence – Spring 2021

Meeting Time: Mon/Wed 9:30 am – 10:45 am

Zoom Link

<https://merrimack.zoom.us/j/95876393253>

Classroom: Cushing 10

Instructor: Dr. Kirstie Lynn Dobbs

Office: Cushing Hall 17b

Office Hours: Virtual on Tuesdays from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm; also by appointment

Office Hours Zoom Link

<https://merrimack.zoom.us/j/99900279201>

Email: dobbsk@merrimack.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to answer three broad questions: 1) What is democracy? 2) How does a country become a democracy? and 3) What is the role of violence in regime change, democratization, and political development? Throughout this course, you will be exposed to how democratic institutions differ in countries across the world. You will also develop a deeper understanding of how countries politically develop through contentious politics. Critical thinking through deep reflection serves as a cornerstone of this course.

The pedagogical method applied to this class is a mixture of lecture-based (very minimal) and an active model of teaching with a heavy emphasis on student-led discussion. Students are expected to take notes during lectures and are also expected to be actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions. A “flipped” model of teaching will also be utilized in this course, where students are expected to have done the reading / learned the material prior to coming to class. This is an upper division course, so the emphasis will be non-textbook reading material that we use for critical reflection and discussion in class. This will allow us to spend more time applying the concepts in active-learning sessions rather than lecturing on basic terminology. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. If a student is more than 15 min late without notice, they will be counted as tardy. Be on time!

Readings

The three core books that will need to purchase / rent for this course are:

1. Dasandi, Niheer. 2018. *Is Democracy Failing? A Primer for the 21st Century*. Thames & Hudson Ltd: London.
2. Teorell, Jan. 2010. *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World, 1972 - 2006*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
3. Arendt, Hannah. 1970. *On Violence*. Harcourt Inc.: London.

In addition to this book there will be supplemental readings that will be available on the course's blackboard course page. Readings should be completed *before* coming to class to enhance and facilitate lectures and class discussion. You should anticipate approximately 60 - 100 pages of reading per week.

Email Correspondence

I am very flexible and more than happy to accommodate students based on their needs. Students may email me at any time during any day of the week to ask for extensions or other accommodations. However, please give me at least 24 hours to respond. Also, I typically do not answer emails on the weekends. If you email me Friday night after 5:00 pm, please do not expect a response till Monday morning. If you email me after 5:00 pm during the week, please do not expect an email till the following day.

Participation and Engagement

This course includes synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and students are expected to attend the course synchronously 2x each week. If you cannot attend class, **please contact me directly for access to the recorded lectures**. Also, students will be able to complete the weekly engagement points if they miss class by completing the Nearpod presentation. Presentations with access codes are located on the blackboard. Students are strongly encouraged to attend synchronously as much as possible. Should you anticipate that you will not be able to attend synchronous sessions on a regular basis, please let me know..

Missing Class

You might have to miss class for a variety of reasons. Luckily for you, all of the class materials are available online. If you miss class, you are expected to complete ALL asynchronous assignments in the module by SUNDAY at midnight of that module week. This includes readings on Perusall and the Nearpod Presentations. Accommodations can be made, but you need to alert me before the assigned due date that you need an extension!

Credit Justification Statement

In this course, students will be expected to do the following amount of work:

- Classroom hours: 1.5 per week
- Reading per week: 4-5 hours per week (on average)
- Prep work for class-based discussion: 2-3 per week (on average)
- Writing: 2-3 per week (on average)
- Video exercises and critical thinking tasks: 1 per week (on average)
- Exam preparation: 2 hour per week (on average)
- Total: 11.5-15.5 hours per week

Access to Blackboard

All course materials will be uploaded to Blackboard. This includes class lectures (videos), rubrics, and assignment sheets. Grades will also be posted on this site. To access Blackboard, go to <https://blackboard.merrimack.edu/ultra/institution-page> and use your Merrimack login credentials to access the course site.

Learning Outcomes

- ❖ Garner the ability to take high-level scholarly work/research and connect it to current events
- ❖ Understand democracy as an ongoing experiment in any country, including the United States
- ❖ Connect contemporary events with global history
- ❖ Sharpen your critical thinking and analytical skills using theory and fact-based knowledge
- ❖ Gain exposure to the utility of big data vs. case study analysis in the study of political development
- ❖ Develop a sense of responsibility for your own learning
- ❖ Fine tune time management skills

Grading

- Final Exam (essay) 20%
- Service Learning 18 %
- Weekly Engagement points 42%
- Perusall Reading Grade 20%

Assignments

Final Exam (20%)

Your final exam will consist of three essay questions that you are to answer in 500 words each. You will be given the essay questions before our last class meeting. Essays will be done online and will be turned in via blackboard. Each student will submit their final exam as a google doc so that I can edit/give comments on your essay directly. The rubric for the final exam will be on Blackboard.

Service Learning (18%)

Students will tutor highschool students from Lawrence High School who are enrolled in Merrimack's Early College Program. These students are currently taking the U.S. Politics course at Merrimack, and they are tasked with writing a 1,500 word essay on a political issue in the U.S. Your task is to meet with your assigned student(s) a minimum of 3x to help them with this paper. Tutor sessions will take place between the beginning of the semester and March 21st. You will meet with your assigned student via zoom. You will complete a pre and post reflection assignment that will be available on Blackboard. Approximate amount of time spent on this option is 3 - 6 hours.

Weekly Engagement Points (42% - 3% per week)

Each week, you will be awarded engagement points for responding to discussion questions, polls, quiz questions, and other activities in class. All of these activities are accessible in the Nearpod presentation that is used to guide the lecture/discussion in class. **If you cannot attend class**, you will complete the Nearpod lecture at your own pace via an accessible link on Blackboard. These links are located in the Nearpod Presentation folder. The access codes associated with each presentation are also located in the folder.

Perusall Reading Grade (20%)

Each week you are assigned a set of readings to complete by Sunday at 11:59 pm. The readings that are outside of the assigned books for this class will be located on Perusall. Perusall is an annotating software system where you can access the weekly readings and annotate them as you read to help deepen your comprehension of the text. At the end of the semester, you will receive an overall grade on your engagement with these reading assignments. In class, we will do one of the first readings assigned in the first week together, so that you get an understanding of how to achieve a high grade on these assignments. To access Perusall go to www.perusall.com and create an account. After you have created the account, enter the access code for this course DOBBS-4NLX8.

Suggested News Outlets

- *The Washington Post*
- *The New York Times*
- *The Economist*
- CNN
- NPR Politics Podcast; NPR's Up First
- New York Times' The Daily
- BBC Global News Podcast

Due Dates and Late Policy:

All assignments must be turned in on their due date through Blackboard. Students must be present for exams and the group presentations. Only unforeseen emergencies with valid documentation will permit students to remake exams and their group presentation. Any assignments that are turned in late will receive a 5 percent deduction for each day (24 hours) that the assignment is tardy.

Assignments that are five days late will no longer be accepted, and you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Please anticipate all possible contingencies (computer failure, printer issues, etc.) and please contact me before or as soon as possible if an issue arises. If a student contacts me about an issue after the assignment is a due, I can no longer make accommodations for that assignment.

Missed classes/Late Assignments: The only excusable reasons for missing a class or exam or handing in an assignment late are serious illnesses and family emergencies. In either case you must both 1) notify me of your situation in a timely manner and 2) provide appropriate documentation. Assignments handed in late without documentation will be penalized by 10% for each date they are late.

Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office

Regardless of whether the course or the student is on-campus or remote, Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities through the Accessibility Services Office. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the Accessibility Services website: www.merrimack.edu/aso, email accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library (subject to change if the college is remote).

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible via the website or via email at accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged semesterly to request for their letters to be emailed and students are responsible to then email the letter to their instructors personally. The Accessibility Services Testing Center remains available to students whether in-person or remote. While it is understood that some students will not use all accommodations in all courses, accommodations can not be made retroactively.

Statement of Community Standards

The following statement is taken from Merrimack College's Student Handbook under Community Standards.

Before all else, the students, faculty, staff, and administration of Merrimack College form an Augustinian community that supports and challenges its members in the pursuit of truth. We declare and celebrate our common purpose, and commit ourselves:

- to serious study, generous service and courageous leadership
- to academic integrity and personal growth
- to civilized discourse in the exchange of ideas
- to friendship, diversity, and mutual respect
- to primacy of conscience and the spiritual life
- to responsibility for the common good, and
- to pride in our school and ourselves

Students have the right to express their views so long as there is neither use nor threat of force, nor interference with the rights of others to express their views (Faculty Handbook 2016, 50).

Academic Integrity Code

The following excerpt is taken from Merrimack's Faculty Handbook and addresses issues surrounding plagiarism. "Plagiarism is intellectual theft. At Merrimack, the failure to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others is considered plagiarism. It is important to avoid even unintentional plagiarism by being familiar with accepted ways to acknowledge

sources and by developing good note-taking and research habits.” Violations of academic integrity also include cheating on exams, fabrication, complicity, appropriation, multiple submissions, and unsanctioned collaboration. Please refer to the following link for a detailed review of the academic integrity code and penalty procedures.
<https://www.merrimack.edu/live/files/365-faculty-handbook>.

A student who violates the academic integrity code in a course may receive an F for the course, or, at the discretion of the instructor, a less severe penalty. If you withdraw from any course in which you have been accused of an academic integrity violation for which the penalty is F for the course, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will record the grade of WF on your transcript (Faculty Handbook 2016). Further action will be taken at the college level.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week of 2/1 Introduction to Course

- Module 1 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7
 - Read *Is Democracy Failing?* p. 1-49
 - Perusall Reading *Political Order and Political Decay* p. 3-21

Week of 2/8 The Evolution of Democracy

- Module 2 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14 <3
 - Read *Is Democracy Failing?* p. 51-79
 - Perusall reading “What Democracy is... and is not.”
 - Perusall reading “Constitutional Choices.”
 - Pre-Service Learning Reflection assignment due

Week of 2/15 How Democracy Works

- Module 3 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21
 - Read *Is Democracy Failing?* p. 81-135
 - Perusall Reading “The Limits of Democracy in Tackling Climate Change.”

Week of 2/22 The Limits of Democracy

- Module 4 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28
 - Perusall Reading *The Time is Always Now*, p. 1-36, 59-78, 129-144

Week of 3/1 Black Thought and the Transformation of US Democracy

- Module 5 (in-class)
 - Class lecture

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY MARCH 7
 - Read *Determinants of Democratization* p. 1-53
 - Perusall Reading “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East.”

Week of 3/8 Explaining Democratization: Social Determinants

- Module 6 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY MARCH 14
 - Read *Determinants of Democratization* p. 54-76
 - Perusall Reading “The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions.”

Week of 3/15 Democratization: Economic Determinants

- Module 7 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work Quiz DUE SUNDAY MARCH 21
 - Read *Determinants of Democratization* p. 77-99
 - Perusall Reading “Preempting Revolutions: The Boundaries of U.S. Influence
 - Post service learning reflection assignment due

Week of 3/22 Democratization: International Determinants

- Module 8 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY MARCH 28
 - Read *Determinants of Democratization* p. 100-116
 - Perusall Reading *The Dictator's Handbook* p. 195-24

Week of 3/29 Democratization: Popular Mobilization

- Module 9 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY APRIL 4
 - Read *Determinants of Democratization* p. 117-160
 - Perusall Reading “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism.”

Week of 4/5 NonDemocratic Regimes

- Module 10 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY APRIL 11
 - Read *On Violence* (whole book)

Week of 4/12 On Violence

- Module 11
 - Class Lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY APRIL 18
 - Perusall Reading *Why Men Rebel*, p. 1-15
 - Perusall Reading *Wages of Rebellion* p. 143-171
 - Perusall Reading *From Voting to Violence* p. 93-128

Week of 4/19 Political Violence

- Module 12 (in-class)
 - Class Lecture
- Asynchronous work DUE SUNDAY APRIL 25
 - Perusall Reading “The Causes of Terrorism”
 - Perusall Reading “Why Respecting Physical Integrity Rights Reduces Terrorism”

Week of 4/26 Terrorism

- Module 13 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY MAY 2
 - Study for Final: Submit Questions in Module on Blackboard

Week of 5/3

- Module 14
 - Final Exam Review