

Class website: www.pippanorris.com



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DPI-413

Challenges of Democratization

Pippa Norris

Fall 2012

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Briefing Memo (15%) Due by the start of class on 19 th Nov.....	7
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Contact Details:

Class time: Mondays and Wednesdays 2.40 to 4.00pm
Class place: Rubenstein Building, RG20
Shopping: Wednesday 5th September 2012
First class: Monday 10th Sept 2012
Last class: Wednesday 4th Dec 2012
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Assessment: Course assignments
Methods: Statistical analysis and illustrative case-studies

Course Synopsis:

This course covers the basic principles, theories, conceptual tools, and comparative methods useful for understanding the challenges of democracy and democratization. Events during the 'Arab spring' have highlighted transitions from autocracy in headline news, although this is far from a novel issue. Since the early-1970s, there have been successive 'waves' of regime change. The international development community has focused increased attention on the challenges of facilitating the transition from autocracy and the consolidation of democratic states. Advocates argue that democratic governance is a universal human right. Moreover this type of regime is also believed to help people live wealthier, healthier, and more secure lives. The process of democratization is thought to elect leaders who are more accountable and responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens, including the poor. Moreover, democratic governance is also believed to promote international peace and cooperation, reducing the causes of conflict and violence between and within states.

The international development community, multilateral organizations, and national stakeholders have used multiple strategies to promote democratic governance. Many resources have been devoted to strengthening the capacity of political institutions, notably through encouraging multiparty competitive elections, independent judiciaries, and effective legislatures designed to curb and counterbalance strong executives, as well as implementing decentralization strategies, anti-corruption drives, and public sector reforms. Democratic assistance has flowed into attempts to foster and expand civic society by nurturing grassroots organizations, advocacy NGOs, human rights watch groups, and the independent news media. And aid has been invested in attempts to expand economic growth, peace-building, and sustainable development, as an indirect route to democratic governance.

Despite processes of regime change and democratization since the early 1970s, one-party states, military-backed dictatorships, autocratic regimes, elitist oligarchies, and absolute monarchies persist. Today there are also many 'electoral autocracies', in states as varied as Singapore, Burma, Russia and Pakistan, which hold multiparty elections but fail to institute the full panoply of human rights and political freedoms. Many states have also seen only partial or unstable steps towards democratic elections, and then reverses, for example in Thailand, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria, and Venezuela. Major problems confront attempts at building stable nation-states and effective governance in Arab States such as Libya and Egypt.