



Democratic Erosion

This **secondary syllabus** consists of a curated set of readings that can seamlessly replace or complement those on the primary syllabus. Faculty can decide for themselves whether to substitute one or more readings from the primary syllabus with selections from the secondary syllabus. This flexibility ensures that the course can be tailored to meet specific teaching preferences, student needs, or institutional contexts.

Class Schedule

Part 1. Theoretical Foundations of Democracy and Democratic Erosion

Week 1: Course Overview and Introduction

Przeworski, Adam. 2024. ["Who Decides What Is Democratic?"](#) *Journal of Democracy* 35 (3): 5-16.

Bartels, Laia M., Ursula E. Daxecker, Susan D. Hyde, Staffan I. Lindberg, and Irfan Nooruddin. 2023. ["The Forum: Global Challenges to Democracy? Perspectives on Democratic Backsliding."](#) *International Studies Review* 25 (2): 1-27.

Protect Democracy. 2023. [*The Authoritarian Playbook.*](#)

Week 2: Definitions and Theories of Democracy and Democratic Consolidation

Schumpeter, Joseph. 1947. [*Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.*](#) New York: Harper & Brothers. Chapter XXII.



Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. ["Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy."](#) *American Political Science Review* 53 (1): 69-105.

Schedler, Andreas. 2001. ["Measuring Democratic Consolidation."](#) *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36 (1): 66-92.

Week 3: Definitions and Theories of Democratic Erosion

Haggard, Stephan, and Robert Kaufman. 2021. ["The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 32 (4): 27-41.

Riaz, Ali, and Sohail Rana. 2024. [*How Autocrats Rise: Sequences of Democratic Backsliding.*](#) New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapters 3 and 4.

Gerschewski, Johannes. 2021. ["Erosion or Decay? Conceptualizing Causes and Mechanisms of Democratic Regression"](#) *Democratization* 28 (1): 43-62.

Diamond, Larry. 2020. ["Democratic Regression in Comparative Perspective: Scope, Methods, and Causes. In Democratic Regressions in Asia."](#) London: Routledge. 22-42.

Stokes, Susan. 2025. [*The Backsliders: Why Leaders Undermine Their Own Democracies.*](#) Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-4.

Part 2. Symptoms of Democratic Erosion

Week 4: Weakening Horizontal Accountability

Huq, Aziz, and Tom Ginsburg. 2017. ["How to Lose a Constitutional Democracy."](#) *UCLA Law Review* 65 (78): 80-169. Parts 1 and 4.

Pérez-Liñán, Aníbal, Nicolás Schmidt, and Daniela Vairo. 2019. ["Presidential Hegemony and Democratic Backsliding in Latin America, 1925-2016."](#) *Democratization* 26 (4): 606-625.



Gidron, Noam. 2023. ["Why Israeli Democracy Is in Crisis."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 34 (3): 33-45.

Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2008. ["Bolivia's Constitutional Breakdown."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 19 (4): 110-124.

Week 5: Weakening Vertical Accountability

Hajnal, Zoltan, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsey Nielson. 2017. ["Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes."](#) *The Journal of Politics* 79 (2): 363-379.

Bessen, Brett R. 2024. ["Populist Discourse and Public Support for Executive Aggrandizement in Latin America."](#) *Comparative Political Studies* 57 (13): 2118-2151.

Tsai, Lily L. 2007. ["Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China."](#) *American Political Science Review* 101 (2): 355-372.

Schedler, Andreas. 2002. ["Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 36-50.

Part 3. Precursors of Democratic Erosion

Week 6: Economic Inequality

Houle, Christian. 2009. ["Inequality and Democracy: Why Inequality Harms Consolidation but Does Not Affect Democratization."](#) *World Politics* 61 (4): 589-622.

Boix, Carles. 2003. [*Democracy and Redistribution*](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1.

Gilens, Martin. 2005. ["Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness."](#) *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (5): 778-796.



Engler, Sarah, and David Weisstanner. 2021. ["The Threat of Social Decline: Income Inequality and Radical Right Support."](#) *Journal of European Public Policy* 28 (2): 153–73.

Week 7: Ethno-Religious Conflict

Horowitz, Donald L. 1993. ["The Challenge of Ethnic Conflict: Democracy in Divided Societies."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 4 (4): 18-38.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. ["What Is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?"](#) *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (1): 397-424.

Posner, Daniel. 2004. ["The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi."](#) *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529-545.

Maizland, Lindsay. 2024. ["India's Muslims: An Increasingly Marginalized Population."](#) *Council on Foreign Relations*.

Week 8: Populism

Mudde, Cas. 2004. ["The Populist Zeitgeist."](#) *Government and Opposition* 39 (4): 541-563.

Pirro, Andrea L., and Ben Stanley. 2021. ["Forging, Bending, and Breaking: The 'Illiberal Playbook' in Hungary and Poland."](#) *Perspectives on Politics* 20(1): 86-101.

Rummens, Stephen. 2017. ["Populism as a Threat to Liberal Democracy."](#) Chapter 28. Edited by Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, and Pierre Ostiguy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Esen, Berk, and Sebnem Gumuscu. 2023. ["How Erdoğan's Populism Won Again."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 34 (3): 21-32.

Arato, Andrew and Jean L. Cohen. 2022. [*Populism and Civil Society: The Challenge to Constitutional Democracy*](#). New York: Oxford University Press. Introduction & Chapter 1.



Week 9: Polarization

McCoy, Jennifer, and Murat Somer. 2019. ["Toward a Theory of Pernicious Polarization and How It Harms Democracies: Comparative Evidence and Possible Remedies."](#) *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681 (1): 234-271.

Iyengar, Shanto, et al. 2019. ["The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States."](#) *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 129-146.

Mason, Lilliana. 2018. [*Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*](#). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 3.

Farrell, Henry. 2012. ["The Consequences of the Internet for Politics."](#) *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (1): 35-52.

Svolik, Milan W. 2019. ["Polarization versus Democracy."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 30 (3): 20-32.

Week 10: Fake News, Misinformation, and Disinformation

Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. 2018. ["The Spread of True and False News Online."](#) *Science* 359 (6380), 1146-1151.

Osmundsen, Mathias, et al. 2021. ["Partisan Polarization Is the Primary Psychological Motivation Behind Political Fake News Sharing on Twitter."](#) *American Political Science Review* 115 (3): 999-1015.

Tucker, Joshua A., Yannis Theodoridis, Margaret E. Roberts, and Pablo Barberá. 2017. ["From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 28 (4), 46-59.

Gunitsky, Seva. 2015. ["Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability."](#) *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (1): 42-54.



Week 11: Clientelism, Corruption, and Money in Politics

Carlin, Ryan E. and Mason Moseley. 2015. ["Good Democrats, Bad Targets: Democratic Values and Clientelistic Vote Buying."](#) *Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 14-26.

Pavão, Nara. 2018. ["Corruption as the Only Option: The Limits to Electoral Accountability."](#) *Journal of Politics* 80 (3): 996-1010.

Keefer, Philip. 2007. ["Clientelism, Credibility, and the Policy Choices of Young Democracies."](#) *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (4): 804-821.

Pinto-Duschinsky, Michael. 2002. ["Financing Politics: A Global View."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 13 (4): 69-86.

Diamond, Larry. 2008. ["The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory State."](#) *Foreign Affairs* 87: 36.

Part 4. Resisting Democratic Erosion?

Week 12: Institutional Resistance

Bernhard, Michael, Timothy Nordstrom, and Christopher Reenock. 2001. ["Economic Performance, Institutional Intermediation, and Democratic Survival."](#) *Journal of Politics*, 63 (3): 775-803.

Bunce, Valerie J., and Sharon L. Wolchik. 2010. ["Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes."](#) *World Politics* 62 (1): 43-86.

Baidhowah, Adfin Rochmad. 2021. ["Defender of Democracy: The Role of Indonesian Constitutional Court in Preventing Rapid Democratic Backsliding."](#) *Constitutional Review* 7 (1): 124-152.

Freeman, Will, and Lucas Perelló. 2022. ["The Long Game: The Opposition Wins in Honduras."](#) *Journal of Democracy* 33 (2): 118-132.



Week 13: Civil Society Resistance

Berman, Sheri. 1997. ["Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic."](#) *World Politics* 49 (3): 401–429.

Pinckney, Jonathan, Charles Butcher, and Jessica M. Braithwaite. 2022. ["Organizations, Resistance, and Democracy: How Civil Society Organizations Impact Democratization."](#) *International Studies Quarterly* 66 (1): 1-14.

Bogati, Subindra, Titik Firawati, Jonathan Pinckney, and Ches Thurber. 2023. ["How Civil Resistance Improves Inclusive Democracy."](#) *Perspectives on Politics*: 1-18.

Setiawan, Ken M., and Dirk Tomsa. 2023. ["Defending a Vulnerable yet Resilient Democracy: Civil Society Activism in Jokowi's Indonesia."](#) *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 42 (3): 350-371.