



S\_WDPI (6 ECTS) | Winter 2022, Period 4

## Workshop in Democracy, Power and Inequality

Tuesday/ Thursday, 15:30-17:15h, Campus/ Zoom



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*Note:* The contents of this syllabus may be subject to changes throughout the semester, which are announced in advance (i.e., before they come into effect). Weeks refer to calendar weeks. The seminars are held on campus and are live-streamed via Zoom. The corresponding audio recordings are posted to Canvas. All Zoom meetings can only be accessed with your official VU Zoom account. Students should contact the course coordinator and teaching assistant by e-mail only through their official VU e-mail account.

**Course Description:** This course surveys influential scholarship from within the fields of comparative democratization and contentious politics, with a particular focus on theory development and research design. It does so by first laying out the principles that enhance the validity of descriptive and causal inferences (Part I). Next, this course critically examines research investigating the causal links that connect democracy to economic inequality (Part II) and political power (Part III). Finally, seminar participants present and discuss their research proposals (Part IV).

**Learning Goals:** After this course, students have: (1) acquired knowledge and understanding of political science research in the area of Comparative Politics; (2) acquired the competences to critically evaluate research in the area of Comparative Politics; (3) demonstrated critical theoretical and normative reflection on research results; (4) acquired the skills to (i) design theory-guided research projects, individually or in groups; (ii) select and apply the appropriate methods and techniques of data collection and analysis to carry out research projects; and (5) enhanced academic writing skills to report on research for discussion and work in small research teams.

### Required Texts:

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2006), *Economic Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship*, New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

Albertus, Michael and Victor Menaldo (2018), *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy*, New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

Chenoweth, Erica and Maria J. Stephan (2011), *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press.

Davenport, Christian (2007), *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*, New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

King, Gary et al. (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Mainwaring, Scott and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán (2013), *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*, New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

**Course Requirements (percentages indicate weights for the final grade):**

<b>Seminar Participation</b>	<b>15%</b>
Participate in seminar discussions and deliver two presentations.	
<b>Assignments (two in total; 15% each)</b>	<b>30%</b>
Submit a total of two assignments (due on Canvas):	
#1 due on Thursday (9:00h) of Week 8 (February 24 <sup>th</sup> ).	
#2 due on Thursday (9:00h) of Week 11 (March 17 <sup>th</sup> ).	
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>20%</b>
Week 9, Friday, March 4 <sup>th</sup> , 12:15-14:30h, Canvas.	
<b>Research Proposal</b>	<b>35%</b>
Due on Canvas on Friday (9:00h) of Week 13 (April 1 <sup>st</sup> ).	

**Seminar Participation**

Seminars are held both in-person and via Zoom. The dates, times and locations are as follows:

Week	Date	Time	Building Code*	Room
Week 7	Tuesday, February 15 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A47
	Friday, February 18 <sup>th</sup>	13:30-15:15h	HG	05A24
Week 8	Tuesday, February 22 <sup>nd</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A47
	Thursday, February 24 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A06
Week 9	Tuesday, March 1 <sup>st</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A47
	Thursday, March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	15:30-17:15h	MF	A415
Week 10	Tuesday, March 8 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A47
	Thursday, March 10 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	HG	02A24
Week 11	Tuesday, March 15 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A47
	Thursday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A06
Week 12	Monday, March 21 <sup>st</sup>	11:00-12:45h	HG	06A32
	Tuesday, March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	3A47
	Thursday, March 24 <sup>th</sup>	15:30-17:15h	NU	4A25
	Friday, March 25 <sup>th</sup>	13:30-15:15h	MF	A311

\* HG = Main building; NU = New University building (the black building facing the soccer fields; MF = Medical Faculty building (next to the University Medical Centre).

The seminar participation grade can range from 0 to 10 points. Seminar participation is assessed on the basis of (1) attendance, (2) contributions to seminar discussions and (3) two group presentations. You can request excused absences for illness, familial situations demanding your immediate attention, religious observances and official VU business. Such requests should be submitted to the course coordinator via e-mail ([w.kastart@vu.nl](mailto:w.kastart@vu.nl)). Seminar participation via Zoom only counts towards the seminar participation grade if agreed in advance by the course coordinator (the same considerations as in the case of requests for excused absences apply).

*(Course requirements continued on the next page.)*

### **Seminar Participation (Group Presentation 1)**

The first group presentation is delivered at the beginning of one of the seminars of Weeks 6-11, and concerns a brief, 15-minute introduction to the seminar discussion. Rather than summarizing the readings assigned to that seminar, the presentation should offer a critical discussion of these texts from the perspective of King et al. (1994, Chapters 1-3), and introduce several discussion questions and/ or “food for thought” comments to that effect. Each presentation should include a one-page handout that lists its main points, which each group should distribute among the seminar participants at the start of the seminar. Students should notify the course coordinator about their preferred seminar time slots by e-mail ([w.kastart@vu.nl](mailto:w.kastart@vu.nl)) no later than Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:00h. For this group presentation, the groups should consist of two students.

### **Seminar Participation (Group Presentation 2)**

The second group presentation is delivered during one of the seminars of Week 12, and concerns a 20-minute presentation of the group’s research proposal. Each presentation should include a two-page handout that summarizes the research proposal. Each group should distribute this handout among the seminar participants at the start of the seminar. For this group presentation, the groups should consist of two students, and correspond to the groups of the Research Proposal (discussed below). Each group should notify the course coordinator about their preferred seminar time slots by e-mail ([w.kastart@vu.nl](mailto:w.kastart@vu.nl)) no later than Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:00h.

### **Essay Assignments**

Students are required to submit two essay assignments, which are due on Canvas on the dates and times listed above. Each essay should offer a critical discussion of the theories and research designs that appear in the texts assigned to Weeks 7-8 (for Essay Assignment 1) and Weeks 9-11 (for Essay Assignment 2) from the perspective of King et al. (1994, Chapters 1-3). Students should complete these essay assignments on their own. Late essay assignments are heavily penalized. Additional instructions for the essay assignments are posted on Canvas. Each essay assignment is assigned a grade that can range from 0 to 10 points, and counts towards 15% of the final grade.

### **Midterm Exam**

The Midterm Exam covers the readings and seminars from Weeks 6-9, is assigned a grade that can range from 0 to 10 points, counts towards 20% of the final grade, and is administered via Canvas on the date and time listed above.

### **Research Proposal**

Students should complete the Research Proposal in groups that consist of two students, who each should submit identical research proposals. The Research Proposal presents: (1) a research question; (2) a summary of the research literature that is directly relevant for addressing the research question; (3) a preliminary answer to the research question that takes the form of a theory; (4) two or more hypotheses derived from the theory; and (5) a research design, which describes how the hypotheses are tested. The Research Proposal counts towards 35% of the final grade and is due on Canvas on the date and time listed above. Late research proposals are heavily penalized. Additional instructions for the Research Proposal are posted on Canvas.

### **Prior Coursework and Entry Requirements**

This course builds upon previous coursework completed in the Master’s program in Political Science at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and prepares graduate students for S\_MTPSD Master’s Thesis in Political Science: Democracy, Power and Inequality. Participation in S\_SIDPSE Selected Issues: Democracy, Populism and the State in Europe serves as the only course prerequisite. This course is also available as an elective course for exchange students.

## Grading Policies

The final class score is the weighted average of the graded components listed under Course Requirements above, and can range from 0 to 10 points. Together with the remaining grading policies detailed below, the final class score determines your final grade, which is assigned on the basis of the following grade distribution:

$\geq 9.750$ :	10	6.750-7.249:	7.0	3.250-3.749:	3.5
9.250-9.749:	9.5	6.250-6.749:	6.5	2.750-3.249:	3.0
8.750-9.249:	9.0	5.250-6.249:	6.0	2.250-2.749:	2.5
8.250-8.749:	8.5	4.750-5.249:	5.0	1.750-2.249:	2.0
7.750-8.249:	8.0	4.250-4.749:	4.5	1.250-1.749:	1.5
7.250-7.749:	7.5	3.750-4.249:	4.0	$\leq 1.249$ :	1.0

## Academic Integrity

Students at VU are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the *Student Charter* (available online at <https://vu.nl/en/education/more-about/important-regulations>). Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct. When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained therein is yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. All suspected violations of the Charter are handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final course grade, and a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean, who may impose additional disciplinary sanctions.

### Re: Note Selling

Selling a faculty member's class notes individually or on behalf of commercial services using VU e-mail or Canvas violates both VU information technology and VU intellectual property policy. Violations of this policy are considered violations of the *Student Charter* and are reported to the Dean as a violation of course rules (academic misconduct).

### Notifications via Canvas

The default notification settings for Canvas can be found online at <https://sites.google.com/vu.nl/canvasstudentguide/getting-started-with-canvas>. You can customize these settings, but note that customizations apply to all courses in which you are enrolled; there is no way to have messages forwarded for one course, but not for others. By default, you receive messages ("conversations") and announcements forwarded to your VU e-mail inbox. If you modify this default setting, it is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly for communications.

### Resit Policies

Irrespective of your final course grade, you can take an integrated Resit Exam, which covers all readings and seminars from Weeks 6-11, and which counts towards 100% of the final grade. That is, the most recent grade applies. The Resit Exam is administered via Canvas in Week 20. To participate in this resit opportunity, students should notify the course coordinator about this via e-mail ([w.kastart@vu.nl](mailto:w.kastart@vu.nl)) no later than Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 9:00h.

## Course Outline

The column on the right reports the workload in hours for each component, which is aggregated at the end of the course outline. The hours listed next to the readings indicate reading time, and correspond to reading on average six pages per hour. The seminars are taught by Wynand Kastart.

Week	Topics and Readings	Hours
	<b>Part I: The Logic of Inference</b>	
Week 6	<p><b>1 Non-teaching week:</b> No seminars are scheduled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Logic of Inference</b> <i>Readings:</i> King et al. (1994, Chapters 1-3)</li> </ul>	18.7
	<b>Part II: Democracy and Inequality</b>	
Week 7	<p><b>2 Economic Inequality and Democratization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theory:</b> Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, Chapter 2) 1.75 5.5</li> <li>• <b>Hypotheses:</b> Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-15:15h <i>Readings:</i> Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, Chapter 2) 1.75</li> </ul>	1.75 5.5 1.75
Week 8	<p><b>3 Democracy and Economic Inequality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theory and Hypotheses:</b> Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Albertus and Menaldo (2018, Chapter 2) 1.75 6.3</li> <li>• <b>Qualitative Research Design:</b> Thursday, February 24<sup>st</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Albertus and Menaldo (2018, Chapters 6-7) 1.75 12.2</li> <li><i>Essay Assignment 1 is to be submitted via Canvas before 9:00h.</i> 8</li> </ul>	1.75 6.3 1.75 12.2 8
	<b>Part III: Democracy and Power</b>	
Week 9	<p><b>4 Democracy and Political Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theory and Hypotheses:</b> Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Davenport (2007, Chapters 1-2) 1.75 7.0</li> <li>• <b>Quantitative Research Design:</b> Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Davenport (2007, Chapters 3-4) 1.75 9.7</li> <li>• <b>Midterm Exam:</b> Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:15-14:30h, Canvas 2.25 <i>Material covered:</i> All readings and seminars from Weeks 6-9. 8</li> </ul>	1.75 7.0 1.75 9.7 2.25 8

(Course outlined continued on the next page.)

Course outline (continued from the previous page):

Week	Topics and Readings	Hours
Week 10	<p><b>5 Political Power and Democratization (1)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theory and Hypotheses:</b> Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, Chapters 1-2)</li> <li>• <b>Quantitative Research Design:</b> Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, Chapters 3 and 8)</li> </ul>	<p>1.75 9.8 1.75 6.7</p>
Week 11	<p><b>6 Political Power and Democratization (2)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theory and Hypotheses:</b> Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2013, Chapter 1)</li> <li>• <b>Qualitative Research Design:</b> Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup> <i>Readings:</i> Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2013, Chapters 5-6) <i>Essay Assignment 2 is to be submitted via Canvas before 9:00h.</i></li> </ul>	<p>1.75 5.7 1.75 13.3 8</p>
<b>Part IV: Research Proposals</b>		
Week 12	<p><b>7 Research Proposals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentations (1):</b> Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 11:00-12:45h</li> <li>• <b>Presentations (2):</b> Tuesday, March 22<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Presentations (3):</b> Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Presentations (4):</b> Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-15:15h</li> </ul>	<p>3 1.75 1.75 1.75 1.75</p>
Week 13	<p><b>Finals Week:</b> No seminars are scheduled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Proposal:</b> Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 9:00h, Canvas <i>Research Proposal is to be submitted via Canvas before 9:00h.</i></li> </ul>	<p>16</p>
Week 20	<p><b>Resit Week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resit Exam:</b> Date and time t.b.d. <i>Material covered:</i> All readings and seminars from Weeks 6-11.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Workload:</b> The course workload amounts to roughly 168 hours of work, corresponds to 6 ECTS (6 × 28 hours) and is composed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Seminars:</b> <math>14 \times 1.75 \approx 25</math> hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Readings:</b> <math>569 \div 6 \approx 95</math> hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Essay Assignments:</b> <math>2 \times 8 = 16</math> hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Midterm Exam:</b> <math>(1 \times 2.25) + (1 \times 8) \approx 10</math> hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Research Proposal:</b> <math>1 \times 16 = 16</math> hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Presentations:</b> <math>(1 \times 3) + (1 \times 3) = 6</math> hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Total:</b> <math>25 + 95 + 16 + 10 + 16 + 6 = 168</math> hrs.</li> </ul>	

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