EuDARe
CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATION IN THE EU

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Jean Monnet Chair EuDARe

Challenges to Democracy and Representation in the EU

Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Catania

Democracy and Authoritarianism – Global Dynamics

Master's Programme in Global Politics and Euro-Mediterranean Relations (LM-62)

Academic year 2026-27

Syllabus

Syllabus of the module as distributed to students.

The course is taught under the Jean Monnet Chair EuDARe (Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Chair, project 101127735). This cover sheet was added by the Chair to the archive copy published on eudare.eu.

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Democracy and Authoritarianism

Global Dynamics

Academic year 2026–2027, First Semester

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Course overview

This course examines democracy and authoritarianism in comparative perspective, with a global focus and a special emphasis on non-European contexts. It gives students the concepts and the tools to understand political institutions, actors, and processes across regime types. It is the global module (6 ECTS) of *Democracy and Authoritarianism. Global and European Dynamics* (9 ECTS); the European module (3 ECTS) is taught by Prof Iole Fontana. The two modules share structure, activities, and assessment.

The course has three goals. First, it introduces the central questions of comparative politics and the conceptual and methodological tools to analyse regimes and political systems. Second, it engages with current debates on challenges to democracy: democratic backsliding, populism, polarisation, social media and disinformation, inequality, and declining political trust. Third, it applies these concepts to regions and countries across the world, in weekly laboratories and in a final simulation.

Each week we discuss one topic in three sessions: a lecture, a laboratory, and a structured debate. Students work in fixed groups, and each group follows one world region. In the laboratories and the debates, students apply the concepts of the week to their region and to current events. By the end of the course they should be able to assess democratic dynamics in a region, test an argument against evidence, and design a feasible research project.

Co-funded by the European Union

1. Expected learning outcomes (RA)

Knowledge and understanding. Students develop advanced knowledge of the main institutions, actors, and processes of political systems in comparative perspective. They distinguish between regime types, evaluate patterns of democratisation and authoritarianism, and analyse challenges such as backsliding, populism, polarisation, disinformation, inequality, and declining trust, with attention to regional variation worldwide.

Applying knowledge and understanding. Students apply and adapt concepts and theories of comparative politics to empirical cases across regions. They integrate theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence and work with indicators such as V-Dem, World Bank, and Eurobarometer to assess democracy, inequality, and political trust.

Making judgements. Students compare and evaluate competing explanations of democratic resilience and decline, construct and defend original arguments supported by evidence, and propose solutions to complex problems. Structured debates, laboratories, and the simulation build this capacity.

Communication skills. Students synthesise and communicate complex arguments in oral, written, and digital form. They lead and take part in structured debates, present group work, and practise negotiation in the simulation.

Learning skills. Students navigate and evaluate academic and policy literature independently, translate abstract debates into applied comparative contexts, and design and defend a feasible research strategy, including research questions, methods, data sources, and limitations.

2. Prerequisites (PR)

There is no formal prerequisite. A general background in political science – comparative politics and international relations – is useful but not indispensable. The core reference texts provide the necessary background; students are welcome to ask the instructor for additional background readings.

3. Course contents (CN)

The global module is organised in three parts:

1. **Introduction and foundations** (sessions 1–5): comparative method; regime types; executives, legislatures, and constraints on the executive; political culture and participation.
2. **Research-based themes** (sessions 6–14), one per week: democratic backsliding; populism and polarisation, with parties and party systems; sources of discontent – social media and disinformation, inequality, and political trust.
3. **Simulation** (sessions 16–18, shared with the European module): students play the actors and institutions of a democracy under pressure and the international actors that respond to it.

The EuDARe seminar (session 15) and the European module come between parts 2 and 3. The detailed session-by-session programme is in section 9.

4. Assessment method (MV)

Assessment evaluates both continuous engagement during the semester and overall achievement of the learning outcomes. It is the same for the global and the European module, and it produces one grade for the 9-ECTS course.

Assessment method

- **Type of assessment:** combination of continuous assessment and a final exam (written + oral).
- **Structure and components (with weight):**
  - *Continuous work – 35%*: weekly posts with short written comments on the group website (individual); laboratory outputs and presentations (group); the structured debate led by the group, and participation in the other debates.
  - *Simulation – 25%*: a group position paper submitted before the simulation; conduct in the negotiation rounds; a short individual reflection submitted after the simulation. *Assessed on:* use of course concepts and evidence; consistency between position and conduct; quality of the individual reflection.
  - *Final exam – 40%*: a **written** test on both modules (multiple-choice questions on core concepts + one or two open questions for analytical depth) and an **oral** component, based on the discussion of a short research design outline (1–2 pages) and a slide deck (3–5 slides), submitted one week in advance.
- **Intermediate assessment:** continuous work and the simulation run through the semester and count for 60% of the final grade as detailed above.
- **Assessment criteria:** grading follows the programme's shared grading grid below (18–30 and *lode*), based on knowledge of the topics, capacity to apply and discuss them critically, and clarity of exposition. In this course, particular weight is given to the ability to connect theory to empirical cases and to design and defend a feasible research strategy.
- **Attending / non-attending students:** the continuous-assessment components assume attendance, in accordance with the Glopem regulations. The rule for students who arrive late because of a delayed visa is in section 8.
- **Language:** English.

If conditions require it, the exam can be held online.

To ensure equal opportunities and in compliance with current laws, interested students may request a personal interview in order to plan any compensatory and/or dispensatory measures based on educational objectives and specific needs. Students can also contact the CInAP (Centro

> per l'Integrazione Attiva e Partecipata – Servizi per le Disabilità e/o i DSA) referring teacher within their department (https://www.cinap.unict.it/content/referenti).

Research design outline (for the oral exam). A short written outline (1–2 pages / 500–1000 words) plus a short slide deck (3–5 slides), including a clear and focused research question; a brief theoretical framing with key concepts and references; hypotheses or expectations with a short justification; and the proposed research design (case selection or data sources, method of analysis). The outline shows that the student can design a feasible study and defend it; a full paper is not expected. Outline and slides are submitted one week before the exam and are the basis for the oral discussion.

> - **Use of AI tools:** students may use AI tools for language editing, exploring sources, and generating content, provided every use is acknowledged and explained in an AI disclaimer. Undeclared use is academic misconduct, and passive copying of AI content is plagiarism. The oral exam checks that the work is the student's own.

Grading scale. Grading follows the programme's shared grading grid, also published on the course website.

In Italy, grades for individual courses range from 18 (minimum pass) to 30 (maximum). The highest grade may be awarded with *lode* (cum laude, distinction) for outstanding performance. The scale is not directly convertible to percentages or GPA, but it is roughly comparable to "sufficient–excellent" ranges used internationally.

Band	Level	Descriptor
0–17	Failed	The student does not demonstrate knowledge of the basic concepts of the course and/or has not completed the required share of work.
18–20	Pass – Sufficient	The student demonstrates a basic knowledge of the topics of the course but shows significant difficulties in discussing or applying them, with limited capacity to engage critically.
21–24	Fair – Satisfac-tory	The student demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the topics of the course and can engage with materials, cases, or discussions in a simple way, though often requiring guidance.
25–27	Good	The student demonstrates a solid knowledge of the topics of the course and can address assignments, case analyses, or discussions independently, with only minor inaccuracies.
28–30	Very Good – Ex-cellent	The student demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the topics of the course, engaging autonomously with readings, cases, and de-bates, and making appropriate connections across themes, with very few errors.
30 with *lode*	Distinction	The student demonstrates outstanding mastery of the course topics, addressing assignments and discussions with originality, critical in-sight, and virtually no errors.

5. Example exam questions (ED)

- *Open question:* Compare elite, institutional, and societal explanations of democratic backsliding, using two cases from different regions.
- *Open question:* Using V-Dem indicators, how would you assess whether a given country is backsliding? Discuss the strengths and limits of the measurement.
- *Open question:* Is polarisation a cause or a symptom of democratic crisis? Use one case.
- *Multiple-choice (example):* Which of the following best distinguishes an "electoral autocracy" from an "electoral democracy" in the V-Dem framework? [four options, one correct]
- *Research-design (oral question):* Present the research question and design of your outline, and justify your case selection and choice of method.

6. Texts and readings (TD)

Reference texts

1. Caramani, D. (ed.) (2023). *Comparative politics*. Oxford University Press.
2. Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2021). *Backsliding: Democratic regress in the contemporary world*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2017). *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Readings by session. Required, additional, and regional readings are listed session by session in section 9; the full list is at the end of this syllabus. The required readings are those students are assumed to have read before the session. The additional readings serve the website posts, the debates, and the research design outline; the regional readings serve each group's region. Students are not expected to read them all.

7. Course delivery (MS)

The course combines a small component of **erogative teaching** (the lectures, which present the core concepts) with a large part of **interactive teaching**, in which students apply the concepts, form judgements, and communicate. The lecture is on Wednesday, the laboratory on Thursday, and the structured debate on Friday. Students work in fixed groups of five or six; each group follows one world region, or part of one where two groups share a region. The interactive formats are:

1. **Laboratories.** After a short introduction, groups work on a set task with data or cases from their region. Every group posts its results, and half the groups, in rotation, present them for discussion.
2. **Structured debates.** After a short introduction, one or two groups lead a debate on the week's question, with prompts and short inputs drawn from the readings and the group websites. Each group leads one debate.

3. **Collaborative website contributions.** Each group maintains a shared online space where members post weekly materials (news, videos, infographics, data) with a short comment (50–100 words), by Wednesday evening.
4. **Simulation.** Over three extended sessions at the end of the course, groups play the domestic actors and institutions of a democracy under pressure, and the international actors that respond. A debrief links the simulation to the concepts of both modules.

> If the course moves to blended or remote delivery, the activities are adjusted and the structure of the syllabus is kept.

8. Attendance (MF)

Attendance is compulsory, with the partial exemptions allowed by the Glopem regulations. Students who arrive late because their visa was granted late may take the exams as non-attending students. They should write to the instructor at the start of the course, so that an equivalent set of tasks can be agreed: a full oral exam on all the course readings in place of continuous work and the simulation, plus the final written and oral exam.

9. Detailed programme (PRG)

Sessions are on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 16:00–18:00. Readings are given in full under each session, with the three reference texts of section 6 in short form; the full list is in the References at the end.

Introduction

1. **Programme induction** (1 October).
2. **Course introduction and comparative method** (2 October). Scope, questions, and methods of comparative politics; organisation of the course and groups.

   Required:
   Caramani (2023), Ch. 0–1
   Additional:
   Caramani (2023), Ch. 3
   Keman, H. (2011). Political systems. In B. Badie, D. Berg-Schlosser & L. Morlino (eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of Political Science* (pp. 2039–2050). SAGE.
   Della Porta, D. (2008). Comparative analysis: case-oriented versus variable-oriented research. In D. Della Porta & M. Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences* (pp. 198–223). Cambridge University Press.
   King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry*. Princeton University Press – Ch. 1
   Lieberman, E. S. (2005). Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 435–452.
   Lijphart, A. (1975). The comparable-cases strategy in comparative research. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8(2), 158–177.

Morton, R. B., & Williams, K. C. (2008). Experimentation in political science. In J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. E. Brady, & D. Collier (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (pp. 339–356). Oxford University Press.
Schmitter, P. (2008). The design of social and political science. In D. Della Porta & M. Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences* (pp. 263–296). Cambridge University Press.
Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 294–308.

Week 1 – Regimes, institutions, actors (7–9 October)

3. **Lecture: democracy and autocracy.** Regime types and trajectories of democratisation and authoritarian persistence.

Required:
Caramani (2023), Ch. 5–6
Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2020). The new competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 51–65. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0004
Additional:
Huntington, S. (1991). Democracy's third wave. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 12–34.
Lijphart, A. (2012). *Patterns of democracy*. Yale University Press – Ch. 1–3
Wahman, M., Teorell, J., & Hadenius, A. (2013). Authoritarian regime types revisited: updated data in comparative perspective. *Contemporary Politics*, 19(1), 19–34.

4. **Laboratory: regime change in your region, 2005–2025 (V-Dem).** *Introduction:* executives, legislatures, and constraints on the executive.

Required:
Caramani (2023), Ch. 7–8
Lührmann, A., Tannenberg, M., & Lindberg, S. I. (2018). Regimes of the world (RoW): Opening new avenues for the comparative study of political regimes. *Politics and Governance*, 6(1), 60–77. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v6i1.1214
Additional:
Caramani (2023), Ch. 11
Lijphart, A. (2012). *Patterns of democracy*. Yale University Press – Ch. 5–8

5. **Debate: institutional vs cultural explanations of participation, in democracies and in autocracies.** *Introduction:* political culture and participation.

Required:
Caramani (2023), Ch. 17
One article for each side:
Kostelka, F., Singh, S. P., & Blais, A. (2024). Is compulsory voting a solution to low and declining turnout? Cross-national evidence since 1945. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 12(1), 76–93. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2022.57 – institutional
Blais, A., & Rubenson, D. (2013). The source of turnout decline: New values or new contexts? *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(1), 95–117. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414012453032 – cultural
Leading group, in addition:
Letsa, N. W. (2020). Expressive voting in autocracies: A theory of non-economic participation with evidence from Cameroon. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(2), 439–453. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592719001002
Neundorf, A., Dahlum, S., Frederiksen, K. V. S., & Öztürk, A. (2026). Elections without constraints? The appeal of electoral autocracy across the world. *British Journal of Political Science*, 56, e1. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123425101129
Additional:

Caramani (2023), Ch. 18–19
Esser, F., & Strömbäck, J. (2014). *Mediatization of politics*. Palgrave Macmillan – Ch. 1
Norris, P. (2017). The conceptual framework of political support. In S. Zmerli & T. W. G. van der Meer (eds.), *Handbook on Political Trust* (pp. 19–32). Edward Elgar.

Week 2 – Democratic backsliding (14–16 October)

6. **Lecture: concept, measurement, cases.**

Required:
Haggard & Kaufman (2021), Ch. 1
Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2026). Competitive authoritarianism in America. *Journal of Democracy*, 37(4), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a1001893
Additional:
Bermeo, N. (2016). On democratic backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 5–19.
Treisman, D. (2023). How great is the current danger to democracy? Assessing the risk with historical data. *Comparative Political Studies*, 56(12), 1924–1952. https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231168363
Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2023). Democracy's surprising resilience. *Journal of Democracy*, 34(4), 5–20. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.a907684
Papada, E., Altman, D., Angiolillo, F., Gastaldi, L., Köhler, T., Lundstedt, M., Natsika, N., Nord, M., Sato, Y., Wiebrecht, F., & Lindberg, S. I. (2023). *Defiance in the Face of Autocratization. Democracy Report 2023*. Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem Institute).
Caramani (2023), Ch. 25

7. **Laboratory: is your country backsliding? (V-Dem).**

Required:
Little, A. T., & Meng, A. (2024). Measuring democratic backsliding. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 57(2), 149–161. https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909652300063X and Knutsen, C. H., Marquardt, K. L., Seim, B., Coppedge, M., Edgell, A. B., Medzihorsky, J., Pemstein, D., Teorell, J., Gerring, J., & Lindberg, S. I. (2024). Conceptual and measurement issues in assessing democratic backsliding. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 57(2), 162–177. https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909652300077X – introduction, figures, and conclusion of each
Haggard & Kaufman (2021), appendix on country profiles
Regional:
Grubman, N. (2022). Coup in Tunisia: Transition arrested. *Journal of Democracy*, 33(1), 12–26 – on Tunisia
Diamond, L. (2010). Democracy's past and future: why are there no Arab democracies? *Journal of Democracy*, 21(1), 93–112 and Josua, M., & Edel, M. (2021). The Arab uprisings and the return of repression. *Mediterranean Politics*, 26(5), 586–611 – on MENA
Ganguly, S. (2020). An illiberal India? *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 193–202 – on India
Slater, D. (2023). What Indonesian democracy can teach the world. *Journal of Democracy*, 34(1), 95–109 – on Indonesia
Bernhard, M. (2021). Democratic backsliding in Poland and Hungary. *Slavic Review*, 80(3), 585–607 – on Poland and Hungary

8. **Debate: what stops backsliding – opposition parties and elites, courts, or protest?**

One article for each side:
Gamboa, L. (2026). How to break an autocrat's coalition. *Journal of Democracy*, 37(4), 182–198. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a1001906 – opposition parties and elites
O'Donohue, A. (2026). How courts survive democratic backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 37(4), 165–181. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a1001905 – courts

Brechenmacher, S. (2026). How protest can halt backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 37(4), 199–214. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a1001907 – protest

Additional:

Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2019). A third wave of autocratization is here: What is new about it? *Democratization*, 26(7), 1095–1113.

Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How democracies die*. Crown – selections

Week 3 – Populism and polarisation (21–23 October)

9. **Lecture: populism, polarisation, and authoritarianism.**

Required:

Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017), Ch. 1, 5

Roberts, K. M. (2022). Populism and polarization in comparative perspective: Constitutive, spatial and institutional dimensions. *Government and Opposition*, 57(4), 680–702. https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2021.14

Additional:

Caramani (2023), Ch. 13–14, on parties and party systems

Farrell, D. M., & Webb, P. (2000). Political parties as campaign organization. In R. J. Dalton & M. P. Wattenberg (eds.), *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (pp. 102–128). Oxford University Press.

Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017), Ch. 2

Caramani, D. (2017). Will vs. reason: The populist and technocratic forms of political representation and their critique to party government. *American Political Science Review*, 111(1), 54–67.

Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2020). Identity politics and populism in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23(1), 421–439.

Kriesi, H., & Pappas, T. S. (eds.) (2015). *European populism in the shadow of the Great Recession*. ECPR Press – Ch. 1

Rooduijn, M. (2018). What unites the voter bases of populist parties? *European Political Science Review*, 10(3), 351–368.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2019). *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press – Ch. 2–3

Schäfer, A. (2022). Cultural backlash? How (not) to explain the rise of authoritarian populism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(4), 1977–1993.

10. **Laboratory: populist actors and polarisation in your region.**

Required:

Iyengar, S., Lelkes, Y., Levendusky, M., Malhotra, N., & Westwood, S. J. (2019). The origins and consequences of affective polarization in the United States. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22, 129–146. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051117-073034

Regional:

Mainwaring, S., & Pérez-Liñán, A. (2023). Why Latin America's democracies are stuck. *Journal of Democracy*, 34(1), 156–170 – on Latin America

Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2013). Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America. *Government and Opposition*, 48(2), 147–174 – on Latin America

Hunter, W., & Power, T. J. (2019). Bolsonaro and Brazil's illiberal backlash. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(1), 68–82 – on Brazil

Varshney, A. (2019). Modi consolidates power: Electoral vibrancy, mounting liberal deficits. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(4), 63–77. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0069 – on India

Kenny, P. D., & Holmes, R. (2020). A new penal populism? Rodrigo Duterte, public opinion, and the war on drugs in the Philippines. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 20(2), 187–205. https://doi.org/10.1017/jea.2020.8 – on the Philippines

Kim, H. S., & Kwon, H. Y. (2026). Partisan sorting, affective polarization, and democratic backsliding: evidence from South Korea. *Democratization*, 33(6), 1286–1309. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2025.2525554 – on South Korea

Castaldo, A. (2018). Populism and competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 18(4), 467–487. https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2018.1550948 – on Türkiye

Cheeseman, N., & Larmer, M. (2015). Ethnopopulism in Africa: opposition mobilization in diverse and unequal societies. *Democratization*, 22(1), 22–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.809065 – on Sub-Saharan Africa

LeBas, A. (2018). Can polarization be positive? Conflict and institutional development in Africa. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(1), 59–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218756923 – on Sub-Saharan Africa

Lieberman, R. C., Mettler, S., Pepinsky, T. B., Roberts, K. M., & Valelly, R. (2019). The Trump presidency and American democracy: A historical and comparative analysis. *Perspectives on Politics*, 17(2), 470–479 – on the United States

Galston, W. A. (2018). The populist challenge to liberal democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 29(2), 5–19 – on the United States

11. **Debate (role play): polarisation, cause or symptom?**

Required:

Casal Bértoa, F., & Rama, J. (2021). Polarization: What do we know and what can we do about it? *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3, 687695. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2021.687695

One article for each side:

Svolik, M. W. (2019). Polarization versus democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(3), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0039 – cause

Mason, L. (2026). Polarization is not the problem. *Journal of Democracy*, 37(4), 105–114. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a1001900 – symptom

Schedler, A. (2023). Rethinking political polarization. *Political Science Quarterly*, 138(3), 335–359 – a manageable feature

Leading groups, in addition:

McCoy, J., & Somer, M. (2021). Overcoming polarization. *Journal of Democracy*, 32(1), 6–21. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2021.0012

Additional:

McCoy, J., Rahman, T., & Somer, M. (2018). Polarization and the global crisis of democracy: Common patterns, dynamics, and pernicious consequences for democratic polities. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(1), 16–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218759576

Orhan, Y. E. (2022). The relationship between affective polarization and democratic backsliding: comparative evidence. *Democratization*, 29(4), 714–735. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.2008912

Somer, M., McCoy, J. L., & Luke, R. E. (2021). Pernicious polarization, autocratization and opposition strategies. *Democratization*, 28(5), 929–948. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2020.1865316

Vachudova, M. A. (2021). Populism, democracy, and party system change in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, 471–498.

Week 4 – Sources of discontent (28–30 October)

12. **Lecture: social media, inequality, and trust.**

Required:

Tucker, J. A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M. E., & Barberá, P. (2017). From liberation to turmoil: Social media and democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4), 46–59.

Lorenz-Spreen, P., Oswald, L., Lewandowsky, S., & Hertwig, R. (2023). A systematic review of worldwide causal and correlational evidence on digital media and democracy. *Nature Human Behav-*

iour, 7(1), 74–101. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01460-1 – summary, figures, and the section on established and emerging democracies

Kreps, S., & Kriner, D. (2023). How AI threatens democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 34(4), 122–131. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.a907693

Additional:

Persily, N., & Tucker, J. A. (eds.) (2020). *Social media and democracy: The state of the field, prospects for reform*. Cambridge University Press – Ch. 3 (Barberá)

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146–1151. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559

Walter, S. (2021). The backlash against globalization. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, 421–442. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102405

13. **Laboratory: trends in political trust – Eurobarometer and non-European survey data.**

Required:

Levi, M., & Stoker, L. (2000). Political trust and trustworthiness. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, 475–507.

Valgarðsson, V., Jennings, W., Stoker, G., Bunting, H., Devine, D., McKay, L., & Klassen, A. (2025). A crisis of political trust? Global trends in institutional trust from 1958 to 2019. *British Journal of Political Science*, 55, e15 – introduction, Figures 7 and 8, and conclusion

Regional:

Lupu, N., Ramírez Bustamante, M. V., & Zechmeister, E. J. (2020). Social media disruption: Messaging mistrust in Latin America. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(3), 160–171. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0038 – on Latin America

Hutchison, M. L., & Johnson, K. (2017). Political trust in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab region. In S. Zmerli & T. W. G. van der Meer (eds.), *Handbook on Political Trust* (pp. 461–487). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782545118.00039 – on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab region

Li, L. (2016). Reassessing trust in the central government: Evidence from five national surveys. *The China Quarterly*, 225, 100–121. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741015001629 – on China

Citrin, J., & Stoker, L. (2018). Political trust in a cynical age. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21, 49–70. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050316-092550 – on the United States

Additional:

van der Meer, T. (2017). Political trust and the "crisis of democracy". *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

Martini, S., & Quaranta, M. (2020). *Citizens and democracy in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan – Ch. 4

Shin, D. (2017). Popular understanding of democracy. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

Przeworski, A. (2019). *Crises of democracy*. Cambridge University Press – Ch. 5

14. **Debate: does inequality undermine democracy?**

Required:

Houle, C. (2018). Does economic inequality breed political inequality? *Democratization*, 25(8), 1500–1518. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2018.1487405 – introduction, Figure 1, and conclusion

One article for each side:

Rau, E. G., & Stokes, S. (2025). Income inequality and the erosion of democracy in the twenty-first century. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 122(1), e2422543121. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2422543121 – yes

Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2012). Inequality and regime change: Democratic transitions and the stability of democratic rule. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 495–516. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000287 – no, not on its own; pp. 495–496 and 507–512

Wong, J. (2026). Why welfare states save democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 37(4), 91–104. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a1001899 – it depends on whether the state redistributes

Leading groups, in addition:

Horn, A., Haselmayer, M., & Klüser, K. J. (2026). Why inequalities persist: Parties' (non)responses to economic inequality, 1970–2020. *American Political Science Review*, 120(1), 346–364. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055425100907

Houle, C. (2009). Inequality and democracy: Why inequality harms consolidation but does not affect democratization. *World Politics*, 61(4), 589–622. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887109990074

Lupu, N., & Warner, Z. (2022). Affluence and congruence: Unequal representation around the world. *The Journal of Politics*, 84(1), 276–290. https://doi.org/10.1086/714930

Regional:

Alence, R. (2004). South Africa after apartheid: The first decade. *Journal of Democracy*, 15(3), 78–92 – on South Africa

Yagboyaju, D. A., & Akinola, A. O. (2019). Nigerian state and the crisis of governance: A critical exposition. *SAGE Open*, 9(3), 2158244019865810. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019865810 – on Nigeria

Additional:

Elsässer, L., & Schäfer, A. (2023). Political inequality in rich democracies. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26, 469–487. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052521-094617

Solt, F. (2008). Economic inequality and democratic political engagement. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1), 48–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00298.x

Krieckhaus, J., Son, B., Bellinger, N. M., & Wells, J. M. (2014). Economic inequality and democratic support. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(1), 139–151. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381613001229

Przeworski, A. (2019). *Crises of democracy*. Cambridge University Press – Ch. 6

(18–20 and 25–27 November: European module, Iole Fontana.)

Seminar and simulation

15. **EuDARe seminar: Adrià Urso Coll** (Wednesday 11 November). Hosted by the course as part of the Jean Monnet Chair EuDARe, in place of a session on the research design outlines; the instructor gives feedback on draft outlines by e-mail in early January.
16. **Simulation: a democracy under pressure** (sessions 16–18; week of 11–15 January, three extended sessions on days to be fixed, shared with the European module). Briefing and domestic round; international round; final round, vote, and debrief. Roles and materials are distributed in December.

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