Democracy-Global South

Course prefix: INTA

Course number: 4241

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
35120

Instructor First Name: Jennifer

Instructor Last Name: Hamilton

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

Modernization theorists argued that democracy emerged in wealthy and formally educated societies – but today, many countries in the Global South hold elections and maintain other democratic features. This course explores the extent of democratic governance, the implications of democratic features, and the challenges and barriers to democratic functioning with particular emphasis on underdeveloped countries.

Course learning outcomes:

This course has three objectives for students:

1. You will grow into **critical thinkers** who can evaluate assumptions and implications and synthesize evidence in pursuit of scientific knowledge.
2. You will grow into **independent learners** who can articulate their interests and goals, develop and executive plans to pursue them, and locate and apply needed resources toward these ends.
3. You will grow into **responsible global citizens** who can describe variation in political practices and institutions and evaluate how they reflect (or fail to reflect) democratic principles.

Required course materials:

Students are not required to purchase any materials for this course.

Grading policy:

Course Engagement (45%)

Reading responses (25%). This assignment incentivizes timely completion of reading and preparation for class discussion. After completing the assigned reading as directed in the syllabus, you will submit a response to one of the associated reflection questions of their choice. To receive full credit, the submission must meet the following criteria: (1) 150 to 300 words in length, (2) directly responds to one associated discussion question, (3) directly and accurately references (with authors, dates, and page numbers) the minimum number of reading(s) required for that meeting, and (4) submitted in advance of the course meeting. Responses must be thoughtful, but they need not be highly polished. A full rubric is available on each submission page. You must submit seventeen reading reflections, with twenty-two opportunities to do so. Late submissions will be accepted up to two weeks after the relevant course meeting but can maximally score 70%.

Discussion Participation (20%). This course requires both regular attendance and regular contributions to class discussions. You should plan to attend the vast majority of class meetings (90%+) and speak during most meetings (60%+). You will receive a preliminary participation grade around the time of midterm reports, and an updated participation grade at the end of the term. Students concerned about their ability to routinely participate in class (including owing to absences) should speak with me as soon as possible. While I am happy to find alternative ways for students to demonstrate active engagement during the course, I will not accommodate pleas or excuses raised only at the end of term.

If you are unable to attend a course meeting, you can avoid an attendance penalty by completing additional work. This work is intended to cover material that you would have reviewed through class discussion. Generally speaking, this make-up assignment will involve completing an additional reading and applying it to answer a secondary discussion question, distinct from your reading response. The make-up assignment appears on the relevant course meeting page. You can complete this make-up assignment for up to two weeks following the missed class meeting.

Term Assignment (55%). Throughout the course, students will work on a term assignment culminating in a presentation during the final course meetings. The final presentation will last 20-25 minutes, with up to 5 additional minutes for questions. Students will choose among three project types: (1) a book review, (2) national election tracking, or (3) a data analysis project. Regardless of project type, you will complete multiple several smaller assignments in support of the final presentation. Unless otherwise noted, students may request an extension *in advance of the deadline* via the extension request form on the assignment submission page; extension requests do not require justification but do require a newly proposed submission deadline within one week of the original deadline. Submissions received more than 24 hours after the deadline (including extended deadlines) will maximally score 70%.

- **Project type selection (1%).** You will need to confirm which final project option you plan to pursue, why you selected this option, and what your goals are for the term assignment. This submission comes early in the course.
- **Project pre-approval (2%).** Each project type requires some form of pre-approval for the presentation topic, as well as submission of a student-generated timeline for tasks required to complete the project (e.g., chapters read, news articles read, data cleaning complete). Reflecting the varying levels of detail and effort required to complete the pre-approval submission, deadlines for this submission vary by project type.
- **Bi-weekly updates (10%).** At pre-determined two-week intervals throughout the course, you will report the progress you have made on the project since the last update, any problems or roadblocks you have encountered for which you want additional support, and (where applicable) whether you are on schedule based on the timeline you proposed and how you plan to catch up. Extension requests are not allowed – if you are running behind, just say so!
- **Student support hours visit (1%).** At least once during the course of the project, you must attend student support hours to discuss the project. You can and should choose the visit timing strategically to make the visit both useful and convenient for you.
- **Slide submission (1%).** To facilitate efficient use of class time, you must submit your presentation slides by midnight preceding your presentation. Extension requests are not applicable or available, except in extreme circumstances (illness or emergency).
- **Post-presentation reflection and self-assessment (35%).** After your presentation is complete and you receive feedback from the instructor and your peers, you will reflect on your performance during the project (what you accomplished and learned) and the presentation (how you conveyed what you accomplished and learned). You will assess a grade for the project based on these considerations.
- **Peer feedback (5%).** You are required to provide substantive, constructive feedback for each presentation, identifying one thing each presenter did well and one area where they could improve. I will attempt to reserve class time to complete this feedback, but you must submit this feedback within 24 hours of the end of class if the allotted time proves insufficient. To ensure thoughtful and relevant feedback, late submissions are not accepted. I will anonymize this feedback and return it to the presenter.

Grade Dispute Procedure: To dispute grades, you must submit a regrade request via email within the dispute window. The dispute window starts 24 hours after students receive the returned graded assignment and ends 72 hours after students receive the returned graded assignment. The regrade request must include a specific description of where and why I should have awarded additional points. I will not accept generalized requests to regrade assignments without this specific description. Upon regrading, I can either raise the grade, lower the grade, or keep it the same.

Final Grade: When evaluating final grades, I will round your weighted average to the nearest whole number and assign a letter grade based on this breakdown: A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 0-59.

Attendance policy:

This course requires both regular attendance and regular contributions to class discussions. You should plan to attend the vast majority of class meetings (90%+) and speak during most meetings (60%+). Students concerned about their ability to routinely participate in class (including owing to absences) should speak with me as soon as possible. While I am happy to find alternative ways for students to demonstrate active engagement during the course, I will not accommodate pleas or excuses raised only at the end of term.

If you are unable to attend a course meeting, you can avoid an attendance penalty by completing additional work. This work is intended to cover material that you would have reviewed through class discussion. Generally speaking, this make-up assignment will involve completing an additional reading and applying it to answer a secondary discussion question, distinct from your reading response. The make-up assignment appears on the relevant course meeting page. You can complete this make-up assignment for up to two weeks following the missed class meeting.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

Per the Center for Teaching and Learning, "Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. For more information on the Honor Code, visit the OSI websiteLinks to an external site.." If you are uncertain what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please check with the instructor prior to submitting an assignment.

AI Usage Policy. The use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT or Gemini is prohibited for reading responses and reflections submitted in case of absence. The only assignment where generate AI is not prohibited during this course are is the term project; allowable uses are quite circumscribed, including the following:

- Topic selection: You man use generative AI to identify a country where an election is occurring, a book to review, or a data set to use when crafting your term project

proposal.
- Coding: If you are conducting an original data analysis for the term project, you can use generative AI for coding purposes. Be aware that you must be able to confirm that AI-generated code actually confirms the operations and analyses you intended; do not blindly trust AI-generated code.

Among other reasons, this limitation on generative AI usage arises from the belief that she who does the thinking does the learning – a proposition that [recent researchLinks to an external site.](#) on student usage of generative AI supports.

Students can use editing tools built into word processors to check subject-verb agreement, punctuation, spelling, etc. However, they cannot use Grammarly or other AI tools to write or rewrite entire sentences or paragraphs. Locating, understanding, and synthesizing information, as well as writing competently, are skills you must develop.

Peer consultation. You are welcome to brainstorm together for both the unit reflections and individual submission for groupwork. You must draft all submitted material independently, however. You may peer-review draft work or use university writing resources to check completed drafts.

Previous coursework. You cannot recycle work from other courses, either past or ongoing, either in part or in full, without permission from the instructor. I will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis based on compatibility with learning objectives.