

COURSE SYLLABUS
Democracy and Democratization
PSCI 332.01E (85120)
FALL 2026
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm-3:15pm
Room: Ferguson Social Science Building 310
THURSDAY, August 20 through TUESDAY December 8

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Robert G. Rodríguez
Professor, Political Science
Interim Associate Department Head, Department of Social Sciences
Coordinator, Sports Media Studies Major

Office Location: **Ferguson Social Science Building, Room 149**

Office Hours:

Tu/Th 11:45am-12:30pm and 3:15pm-5:00pm (please send me an email in advance if you would like to meet at a specific time/date); **or by appointment** (in-person or zoom).
The BEST way to contact me is via email.

Office Phone: **903-468-3094**, however, the best way to contact me is by email.

University Email Address: **robert.rodriguez@etamu.edu**

Check this Syllabus to see if your question is answered FIRST.

Preferred Form of Communication: Please send me an email if you would like to contact me.

****CHECK YOUR EMAIL FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS DAILY****

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor's discretion.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Book

DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA (THIRD EDITION)

Authors: SMITH AND SELLS

E-Book ISBN: 9780190651688

You should purchase the E-Book version of the required book for this course. It is available on the publisher's website for students for \$39.99:

<https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/democracy-in-latin-america-9780190611347?cc=us&lang=en&>

*****Please Note: There may be additional reading assignments for this course that will be freely accessible through D2L or the internet.*****

Course Description:

A study of major theories concerning cultural, social economic, and political conditions that are favorable to the development of democracy. May be repeated when the focus varies. The focus of this course for the Fall 2026 Semester is LATIN AMERICA.

Format:

This is an IN-PERSON course that may have some components online by logging into the course through **D2L Brightspace** on your **MyLEO** account. Each class session will involve lectures and robust discussions about the assigned readings. You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions about the assigned readings and answer questions about the readings. In addition to the assigned readings listed in the syllabus, we will regularly discuss current topics that are related to democracy and democratization in Latin America and beyond.

The course schedule is organized into four learning modules (Units). Learning materials and activities include **in-person lectures, discussions and exams** for each unit in addition to a **poster presentation** that will be displayed at a symposium at the end of the semester.

Note: You will NOT be told what to think in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the tools to make your own assessments about the topics covered in this course.

YOUR LAPTOPS ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO ACCESS COURSE READINGS OR OTHER PURPOSES SPECIFIED BY YOUR PROFESSOR.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES MAY NOT BE USED TO TAKE NOTES.

YOU WILL NEED TO BRING A NOTEBOOK AND PEN/PENCIL TO CLASS.

OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS AT ANY TIME. THIS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO):

CELL PHONES AND SMART WATCHES

IF ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE BEING USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE THAN ACCESSING COURSE READINGS, THE INDIVIDUAL(S) RESPONSIBLE MAY BE DIRECTED TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM IMMEDIATELY. THIS WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT ONE'S PARTICIPATION GRADE.

The course materials are divided into FOUR units (that correspond to the four units of the required textbook):

- **Unit 1: Theoretical Perspectives on Democracy and Democratization; Historical Perspectives (August 20-September 24)**
 - *Student Statement of Personal Responsibility DUE THURSDAY, September 3 (ONLINE by 11:59pm CST)*
 - *UNIT 1 EXAM THURSDAY, September 24*
- **Unit 2: The Electoral Arena (September 29-October 22)**
 - *UNIT 2 EXAM THURSDAY, October 22*
- **Unit 3: Qualities of Democracy October 27-November 12)**
 - *UNIT 3 EXAM THURSDAY, November 12*
- **Unit 4: Democracy Considered (November 17-December 3)**
 - *Poster Presentation at LALS Research Symposium THURSDAY, December 3 (Location TBA)*
- **Finals Week-Exam 4 (December 8)**
 - *Unit 4 Exam TUESDAY, December 8, 1:15pm-2:30pm (note time)*

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain democracy and democratization.

Global Learning Outcomes:

Learning Outcome 1: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, processes, trends, and systems).

Learning Outcome 2: Students will be able to apply knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will be able to view themselves as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade will consist of:

A) Four Examinations (worth 16% each, 64% total)

B) One Poster Presentation (23%)

C) Attendance (10%)

D) Participation (3%)

E) Your submitted Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (1% Extra Credit-- IF submitted to me by the deadline).

A 90-100%; B 80-89.9%; C 70-79.9%; D 60-69.9%; F Below 60%

Each element of your grade is described below.

A) Examinations: In this course, **all students are required to take FOUR exams**, each of which will consist of 20 questions in a multiple-choice format. Exams will be held in-person unless otherwise announced. Together, these exams will comprise **64%** of your grade (each exam is worth 16%). The exams are NOT comprehensive. There is NOT a final exam in this course, but you will have to take Exam 4 during Finals Week.

If you do not complete an exam during the designated class session, you will receive 0% for that exam.

If you have a **legitimate reason** for not completing an exam during the designated date (e.g. severe illness or injury *requiring professional medical care*, emergencies in your *immediate* family, participation in *official* university activities, legal *obligations*) **AND** you have **supporting documentation** for your inability to take the exam, then you may **request** an extension of the date to take the exam.

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be **submitted in writing VIA EMAIL and include SCANNED documentation** explaining and substantiating why your inability to take the exam during the designated date was legitimate. An approval to extend the period for you to complete the exam **will be based solely upon the professor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation**.

EXAM DATES

- UNIT 1 (Exam 1) Thursday, September 24
- UNIT 2 (Exam 2) Thursday, October 22
- UNIT 3 (Exam 3) Thursday, November 12
- UNIT 4 (Exam 4) Tuesday, December 8 (1:15-2:30)

B) Poster Presentation: You will be assigned to create a poster presentation on a case study of democratization in an assigned Latin American country. This assignment is an INDIVIDUAL project, not a group project. Each student must produce a poster on a different country.

You will be provided with detailed instructions as we get closer to Thanksgiving Break, and MUST follow the provided instructions and format to successfully complete this assignment. You will present your poster at a research symposium that will be held during our class time on December 3. The research symposium will be held on-campus and will open to the entire university community. Your poster presentation is worth 23% of your grade in this course.

POSTER PRESENTATION

- *Poster Presentation Thursday, December 3 during our class time at a location to be announced*

C) Attendance: 10% of your grade is based on your class attendance. Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken at each class session. Signing in a student who is not present or asking a student to sign you in when you are absent constitutes academic dishonesty (see p. 10). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have signed in. Arriving late and/or leaving early will negatively impact your attendance grade. *Attendance is critical, discussions are irreplaceable, and course sessions cannot be "made up."*

I will not be managing any excuses for absences. It is not necessary to provide me with any excuses for absences (unless you are absent during an examination-read previous section.)

You can miss up to three class sessions without penalty for any reason. More than three absences will result in a reduction in your grade.

The attendance grade scale appears below:

- 0 absences = you will get a bonus of 2% added to your grade
 - 1-3 absences= no penalty
 - 4 absences= -2% from your grade
 - 5 absences= -3% from your grade
 - 6 absences= -4% from your grade
 - 7 absences= -5% from your grade
 - 8 absences= -6% from your grade
 - 9 absences= -7% from your grade
 - 10 absences= -8% from your grade
 - 11 or more absences= -10% from your grade
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- ***Attendance Note 1: If a pop quiz or any other assignment is given when you are absent, you CANNOT make it up, regardless of the reason for your absence (excused or unexcused).***
 - ***Attendance Note 2: I will NOT reply to any emails asking what we did in class during your absence- We will follow the syllabus. If you miss class, get notes from a classmate and ask him/her if there were any announcements.***
 - ***Attendance Note 3: Students who attend ALL class sessions and do not have ANY unexcused OR excused absences will receive a bonus of 2% added to their attendance grade.***
 - ***Attendance Note 4: ARRIVE ON TIME! The classroom door will not be opened for late arrivals 5 minutes after class starts. Notify the professor in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.***

D) Participation: 3% Your participation in this class is worth up to **3%** of your grade.

Your contributions to the class discussions are highly desirable and will make class sessions more interesting. Positive participation includes responding to my questions, asking your own questions, and contributing to class discussions. All of these activities will positively impact your participation grade.

Negative participation includes: sleeping in class, side-talk with your neighbors, coming to class late, and any other class disruptions- any of these activities will negatively impact your participation grade, even if you contribute to class discussions. If you use personal electronic devices in class that will result in a pop quiz for the entire class and your removal from the classroom, and it will negatively impact your participation grade. Also, if you misbehave in class or disrupt class in any way you may be directed to leave the classroom and your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

Your participation grade will be calculated as follows:

Almost Always/Always Contributes to Class Discussions:	3%
Often Contributes to Class Discussions:	2%
Rarely/Sometimes Contributes to Class Discussions:	1%
Never Contributes to Class Discussions:	0%

E) STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

YOU MUST SUBMIT A STATEMENT ON D2L ACKNOWLEDGING YOU HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING *STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY* BY THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. This is a requirement to remain enrolled in this course and **1% extra credit** will be added to your total grade in this course **IF** you submit it to me by the deadline.

*****DO NOT EMAIL YOUR STATEMENT TO ME- IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. I WILL PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLASS ON HOW TO SUBMIT A FILE ON D2L *****

Statement: I have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of "F" in the course.

STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY DUE DATE:

o Thursday, September 3, by 11:59pm

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

August 20-September 24

Unit 1: Theoretical Perspectives on Democracy and Democratization; Historical Perspectives

Required Readings and Activities:

- **Purchase** your required book
- Complete the following readings:
 - o Smith & Sells Introduction: Dimensions of Democracy
 - o Smith & Sells Chapter 1: Cycles of Electoral Democracy
 - o Smith & Sells Chapter 2: Transitions and Continuities
 - o Smith & Sells Chapter 3: The Military: Heading for the Exits?
 - o Smith & Sells Chapter 4: Global Contexts, International Forces
- **Submit acknowledgment ON D2L** that you have read and agree to the Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (By 11:59pm, **Thursday, September 3**)
- **UNIT 1 (Exam 1) THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

September 29-October 22

Unit 2: The Electoral Arena

Required Readings and Activities:

- Complete the following readings:
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 5: Presidents or Parliaments?
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 6: Institutional Designs
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 7: Elections: Voters, Winners, Losers
- *UNIT 2 (Exam 2): THURSDAY, October 22*

October 27-November 12

Unit 3: Qualities of Democracy

Required Readings and Activities:

- Complete the following readings:
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 8: State Capacity and Policy Performance
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 9: The Politics of Social Equity
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 10: Illiberal Democracy
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 11: The People's Verdict
- *UNIT 3 (Exam 3) THURSDAY, November 12*

November 17-December 3

Unit 4: Democracy Considered

Required Readings and Activities:

- Complete the following readings:
 - Smith & Sells Chapter 12: The Dialectic of Democracy
 - Smith & Sells Epilogue: The Future of Democracy
- Watch film online (Nov 24); Thanksgiving (Nov 26)
- *Poster Presentation at LALS Research Symposium THURSDAY, December 3 (Location TBA)*

December 8

Finals Week

Required Activities:

- *Unit 4 Exam **TUESDAY, December 8, 1:15pm-2:30pm (note time)***

UNIVERSITY/COURSE POLICIES

1. **Electronic devices** (such as cell phones, smartwatches, laptops, ipads, earbuds, etc.) of any kind are NEVER permitted during class, with the possible exception of your laptops to access readings ONLY. You will be directed to stop using these items and/or leave the classroom immediately if you have an electronic device visible or are using your laptop inappropriately.

2. **Disruptions of any kind** (as determined by your professor, such as side-conversations and ANY display of disrespect to anyone) are absolutely prohibited in a university classroom. You will be directed to cease this type of activity and/or leave the classroom immediately if you disrupt class in any way. Persistent disruptions will be reported to the Dean of Students office for further action and you will be prohibited from attending class until the Dean of Students has authorized your return.

3. **Be on time.** The class door will be closed and locked 5 minutes after class begins, and will not be opened for anyone until class is dismissed. If you know you will be arriving late or need to leave class early for any reason, you must inform your professor before class begins.

4. **Follow the Code of Student Conduct:** All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. Faculty have the authority to direct students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the classroom and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook: http://www.tamuc.edu/student_guidebook/Student_Guidebook.pdf

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced.

Email

Before you ask me a question in an email, check to see if the syllabus answers your question FIRST. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails that ask questions about items covered in the syllabus, such as what chapters are covered on an exam or what the assigned readings are for a given class session.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the University attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me prior to submitting any assignments.

ETAMU Counseling Center Statement

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

<https://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campuservices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/default.aspx>

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Some activities in this course will require the use of accessing D2L Brightspace

TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technology Required

USE CHROME OR FIREFOX BROWSERS WITH D2L—DO NOT USE Microsoft EDGE as this tends to have bugs when using this learning platform

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using the learning management system, using Microsoft Word and uploading digital images.

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>