

Welcome and thank you for your interest in this seminar.

You can find the syllabus here: [SOC-STD 98TD Syllabus Fall 2021.pdf](#)

Shopping Week Information Sessions

Thursday, August 19, 4:00 - 4:30 PM

Monday, August 23, 4:00 - 4:30 PM

Zoom link for information sessions [here](#).

Class Sessions

Wednesdays, 9:45 AM - 11:45 AM

William James 305

Instructor

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Course Description

What does the practice of democracy look like in developing countries today? How does that practice map on to the democratic ideals of representation, participation and accountability as espoused by political philosophers and social theorists? What are developing countries'™ major democratic challenges and successes? How does a country's™ income level impact, and in turn is impacted by, democratic participation? Main themes to be covered include overarching issues like representation, accountability, and state strength, as well as more specific areas of democratic practice such as participatory democracy, civil society and activism, corruption, and managing diversity.

Drawing on both theoretical and empirical social science research, the course explores these questions by blending theory and case studies drawn primarily from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The course begins by reviewing the main ideals underpinning the establishment of democracy, considering questions of representation and accountability, as a foundation for later asking how those ideals are implemented in practice. We will also examine governance and the citizen-state relationship framed within the backdrop of state and institutional strength. From there, students will examine three challenges faced in the practice of democracy today: ensuring formal and informal participation in the political process; reducing corruption and clientelism; and addressing inequality and diversity. Throughout, the course considers how democratic practice is impacted by the politics of international development and by international and domestic forces more widely.

A large focus of the course will be on developing students'™ skills in conducting original research, in preparation for the senior thesis. Most weeks, in addition to the thematic content, part of the class meeting will cover a particular research skill or step in the research process. Students will submit progressive components of their research project and receive individual written feedback at each phase that will then be incorporated into a final paper.

