

POSC 357/457: Economic, Environmental, and Health Challenges— The Impact of Democracy

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In this era when seemingly intractable problems, such as economic inequality, climate change, and pandemics exist, it is important to understand which political institutions and practices can help address them. To what extent does democracy result in positive economic, environmental, and health outcomes? Which democratic institutions should practitioners advocate for and policymakers introduce to most effectively address economic, environmental, and public health challenges? These questions are all the more important to investigate considering the global erosion of confidence in democracy. Instructed by faculty from the disciplines of ecology, economics, epidemiology, medicine, political science, and sociology, students will learn about current economic, environmental, and public health problems and various democratic and non-democratic political institutions. They will read and discuss the latest findings about how democratic and non-democratic political institutions impact economic, environmental, and public health outcomes. Topics include economic inequality, economic growth, global warming, air pollution, infectious and chronic diseases, and worker health and safety. Building on this foundation of knowledge, students will work together to investigate the impact of political institutions on problems of their own choosing.

Course Materials

Readings include academic journal articles, working papers, and manuscripts, and they are available on the Canvas course site. Paper or electronic copies of readings should be brought to class the days they are assigned.

Canvas

The Canvas course site will be used to disseminate the assigned readings and some class handouts. Comments and grades on assignments will be written in the Word documents the students submitted and returned to them by email. Assignment grades will not be posted on Canvas. The course will use CWRU email, not Canvas, for communications.

Course Requirements

Participation: The class is discussion-based, and students should take notes on the readings in order to be prepared to integrate and critique the materials and to pose questions for discussion. Readings should be completed prior to the day they will be discussed, and paper or electronic copies of readings should be brought to class the days they are assigned. Because participation is critical to understanding the material, students are expected to attend all classes. Except under extraordinary circumstances, including COVID-19 isolation or quarantine, absenteeism will negatively affect students' final grades.

Regime Types Essay: Due Wednesday, January 19, 12:45 pm by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. In this essay, students will present their own argument about how democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes differ from each other using evidence from the January 12 and January 19 readings to support their arguments. The purpose of this essay is to help students understand the different regime types, prepare to discuss them in class, and prepare to use them in their group projects. The strongest essays typically introduce the argument in the first paragraph and then use evidence from the readings throughout the remainder of the paper to defend the argument. If they like, students may include a visual, like a table, to underscore the differences they identify. Regime type essays should be between two to two and half pages double-spaced and submitted as Word files. Evaluation of the papers will take into account the coherence of the argument, use of assigned materials, and quality of writing.

Mini-Design: Due 12:45 pm the day of class the assigned readings are discussed, by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. Undergraduates will write a mini-design for one of the two weeks for each of the following topics: Economic Challenges, Environmental Challenges, and Health Challenges—for a total of three mini-designs. Within these guidelines, undergraduates can choose which week to write. Graduate students will write mini-designs for each of these weeks for a total of six mini-designs. The purpose of these mini-designs is to help students understand, critique, and integrate the readings; prepare to discuss the material in class, and practice generating ideas for the group project. In the mini-design, each student should propose a study on regime types' impact on the topic of the assigned readings for that week (e.g., air pollution). The proposed study can focus on overall regime types or specific political institutions or practices that differ across regime types (e.g., freedom of expression). Students should propose a simple study, not something as complicated and as expansive as the authors of the readings have completed. This is an opportunity to be creative and brainstorm about an idea that interests you. The mini-design should include the following sections:

Introduction—describe to the reader the puzzle to be examined and how investigating the puzzle would contribute something to our knowledge that the assigned readings (and those they review) have not.

Question or Hypothesis—explain to the reader the question your study will answer or what you expect to find, were you to complete your study.

Data—indicate the data you would use, preferably identifying data from the POSC 357 457 Dataset on Canvas. If data are not in the class dataset, identify data from the assigned readings or provide a description of the type of data you would look for.

Method—describe what you would do with the data. This could be a simple test, such as a frequency table (e.g., the percentages of epidemics between 1975 and 2018 that have taken

place in countries with democratic, hybrid, and authoritarian regimes), or a more complex test, such as multivariate regression (e.g., number of epidemics regressed on regime types using a curvilinear model and controlling for Gross Domestic Product, population density, and malnutrition rates). Remember simple is fine.

Mini-designs should use future tense because they are proposals, be between two to two and half pages double-spaced, and be submitted as Word files. Evaluation of the mini-designs will take into account the extent to which they include the four parts above, meet the objectives described for each of the four, and are written in a clear, error-free, and engaging manner.

Group Investigation: In the final third of the course students will complete group projects in which they examine the impact of regime types (or specific political institutions and practices) on a problem of their choosing. Projects will draw on existing global democracy, economic, environmental, and public health datasets. Students will form their own groups of four to five individuals based on both their interests and also the skills they can bring to the group. Groups can include both undergraduates and graduate students. With the assistance of the lead instructor, groups should build on the coursework to craft a narrow, well-defined research question that is answerable, using existing data, during the final third of the semester. From these investigations, groups will produce a written analysis and an infographic, and prepare for a discussion with practitioners, such as democracy advocates, economic development promoters, environmental activists, and public health officials.

During the semester each student will complete the following series of assignments to assist with and to culminate in production of the final products—the analysis, the infographic, and the discussion.

Research Idea: Due Tuesday, March 22, 12:45 pm (afternoon) by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. In two sentences each student will describe a research topic he or she is interested in exploring for the group investigation. It can be something written about in a mini-design. The topic should fit within the framework of regime types' (or their political institutions' and practices') impact on a particular problem. If a student cannot decide between multiple ideas, multiple two-sentence descriptions can be submitted in the same entry. These ideas will be shared with all students to facilitate formation of groups. Evaluation of the research idea(s) will take into account the degree to which the idea fits within the framework.

Research Question and Design: Due Sunday, March 27, 12:45 pm (afternoon) by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. Each group will provide a one-page design that includes: a one-sentence statement of its research question, a description of the outcome of interest (dependent variable) and the potential influences on that outcome (independent variables) and the data to be used to measure them, hyperlinks to the data sources, and descriptions of the different tests of the data to be conducted. Simple tests, such as frequency tables (e.g., the percentages of epidemics between 1975 and 2018 that have taken place in countries with democratic, hybrid, and authoritarian regimes), or more complex tests, such as multivariate regression (e.g., number of epidemics regressed on regime types using a curvilinear model and controlling for Gross Domestic Product, population density, and malnutrition rates), are acceptable. A group may break a broad research question into a series of narrower ones and corresponding tests. Additional guidance about datasets and tests will be posted on the Canvas course site. Evaluation of the research design will take into account the degree to which it includes each of the components described above, is feasible to execute within the allotted time, and is clearly written.

Analysis: Due Sunday, April 10, 12:45 pm (afternoon) by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. Each group will provide a written analysis that includes 1) a one-paragraph introduction that summarizes the findings, 2) subsections that each lead with a finding and then provide evidence to support that finding or, if there is only a single finding, each subsection should provide a different type of evidence to support that finding, 3) an appendix that defines each variable used in the analysis, including scale, direction of scale, and data source. The analysis should include evidence in the form of visuals, such as tables, graphs, and other figures. The analysis should be seven to ten pages double-spaced, including the appendix. Evaluation of the analysis will take into account the degree to which it includes each of the components listed above, the evidence matches the claims, and the information is clearly written and presented.

Infographic: First version due Tuesday, April 12, 12:45 pm (afternoon) and revised due Thursday, April 14, 12:45 pm (afternoon) by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. Each group will highlight its findings in a one-page infographic that will be understandable to a general audience. A sample infographic will be posted on the Canvas course site but aim for something simpler. The groups' infographic should meet the following requirements:

Content

- Title that conveys message (e.g., Democracies Have Fewer Epidemic Deaths)
- Group members' names
- A sentence or two that conveys contribution to the literature (e.g., Whereas studies have examined specific epidemics, we examine all types of epidemics.)
- A sentence or two that conveys the main finding/each finding. (e.g., Democracies are significantly better at preventing epidemic deaths than non-democratic regimes... Reduced deaths are due to greater constraints on the executive...)
- Visuals
- Sentence or phrase about data time and geographic coverage, if not evident from visuals
- Sentence or phrase about method(s), if not evident from visuals
- List of data (original) sources and other referenced sources; can be small print in a single sentence

Style

- Understandable by an educated, non-expert person
- Simple text and visuals
- Visually stimulating

Evaluation of the infographic will take into account the degree to which the infographic clearly conveys the finding(s) to a general audience and is aesthetically appealing.

Practice Discussion: Monday, April 18 during class. Each group will present for five minutes using its infographic as a visual. Each group will respond to questions from their classmates and the instructors. To prepare:

- Determine which role each member of your group will play. A five-minute presentation can comfortably be divided between two, but not more speakers. Other group members can prepare to respond to questions on certain subtopics, i.e., existing literature, data, tests, possible causal mechanisms, etc.
- Organize the remarks so that the speakers lead with the finding(s) and then describe evidence in support of the finding(s).
- Check that speakers do not use statistical jargon, except perhaps for a sentence about methods.

- Speakers should practice the presentation so that they are completely comfortable and can do it with a smile.
- Review the key points, your notes, and readings for the area in which your group topic falls (economic, environmental, or public health).
- Read the brief biographies and LinkedIn biographies of the speakers, to be distributed later, so that you know your audience.
- Smile! You have made so much progress and have such interesting findings to share!

Those group members who are not presenting, for the purpose of the practice discussion, will be playing the role of democracy practitioner and also offering input on the infographics, which will be available during class. Read the key points from the entire class to help you ask questions of the other groups.

Evaluation of the group's participation in the practice discussion will take into account the degree to which the presentation conveys the information clearly, the group answers questions coherently, and group members ask questions of other groups.

Discussion with Practitioners: Wednesday, April 20 during class. Practitioners will receive infographics in advance to review. Students will elaborate on their infographics, as practitioners' interests dictate, and respond to practitioners' questions.

To prepare, 1) repeat the items listed for the practice discussion, as needed, 2) discuss with your group how to improve upon the practice discussion and take necessary steps in advance, 3) Again, remember to SMILE during the session.

This is an opportunity to begin to develop a connection to these individuals and their organizations, which hire college interns and recent graduates and have held informational interviews for past class alumni. For this reason, I also recommend wearing business casual (at least on top), but that is your choice.

Graduate Research Paper: Due Monday, April 25, 12:45 pm (afternoon) by email to kelly.mcmann@case.edu. Each student enrolled in 457 will complete an individual research paper that will draw on the analysis from their group and will include the following sections: an introduction of the topic including the statement of the argument (2-3 pages); a review of the literature on the topic, structured by how the analysis conducted contributes to it (2-3 pages); an elaboration of the argument and its subpoints (3-4 pages); a section describing the data and methods (2-3 pages), an analysis section providing evidence to support each of the argument's subpoints (8-10 pages); a conclusion summarizing the argument and evidence and commenting on policy implications and/or future research steps (2-3 pages); a works cited; and an appendix defining each variable (1-2 pages) for a total of 20-28 pages double-spaced, not including the works cited. Graduate students should begin working on the research paper March 23 by reading additional works for the literature review. The lead instructor can provide suggestions. Graduate students can adapt or augment their groups' analysis sections if they like. Evaluation of the graduate research paper will take into account the extent to which the review of the literature makes a compelling case that the analysis contributes to the literature, the coherence of the argument, the degree to which the evidence supports the argument, and the quality of the writing.

All written work should be carefully structured and grammatically correct. Informal citations—phrases like “as Bollyky et al. argue”—are acceptable in written work except the graduate research paper, which requires formal citations using any standard format. To avoid plagiarism,

students should review “Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It,” on the Canvas course site. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated by university judicial bodies.

For undergraduates, class participation and attendance, including sharing the research idea and the practice and actual discussions, will constitute 10 percent of the course grade, the regime type essay and mini-designs for a total of 40 percent, the research design 10 percent, the analysis 25 percent, and the infographic 15 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on any assignment for each day it is late.

For graduate students, class participation and attendance, including the research idea and practice and actual discussions, will constitute 5 percent of the course grade, the regime type essay and mini-designs for a total of 25 percent, the research design 10 percent, the analysis 20 percent, and the infographic 15 percent, the graduate research paper for 25 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on any assignment for each day it is late.

The lead instructor is responsible for evaluating student work and providing grades.

Course Schedule and Readings

Part I. Regime Types

Monday, Jan. 10: Introduction to Regime Types and Course

Wednesday, Jan. 12: Democratic Regimes

Robert Alan Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Read 1-6.

Przeworski, Adam. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Read 10-14, 26-34.

Monday, Jan. 17 NO CLASS—MLK Day

Wednesday, Jan. 19: Non-Democratic Regimes

Juan J. Linz. “An Authoritarian Regime: Spain.” In *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology*, edited by Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan, 251-283. New York: Free Press, 1970. Read 251-267.

Larry Diamond. “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes.” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (April 2002): 21-35.

Andreas Schedler. “Authoritarianism’s Last Line of Defense.” *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 1 (2009): 69-80.

Due: Regime Types Essay

Monday, Jan. 24: Discussion with Alumni Practitioners

Due: In advance of class, review the Linked profiles of the practitioners, [Mitchell Delaney](#) ’11 and [Olivia Ortega](#) ’16 and prepare in your notes for each practitioner two questions related to regimes types’ impact on their work.

The discussion will be on Zoom so that masks will not be needed. Identify a location where you can be maskless and have light in front of you, not behind you. Connect a few minutes before 12:45.

<https://cwru.zoom.us/j/98526058598?pwd=UGkzNXRlMTMweFpOR05ZUIRwK3FEZz09>

Meeting ID: 985 2605 8598

Passcode: 923291

Wednesday, Jan. 26: Guidance about Mini-Designs and Group Investigations—Part 1

Due: In advance of class...

- 1) Check that you have Excel on the computer that you bring to class. If not, download it from the CWRU computer software center as part of Microsoft Office for free. If you have difficulties, email our technical and data assistant, Andrew Slivka, a.j.slivka@gmail.com, for help.
- 2) "Install the Data Analysis ToolPak in Excel:...To determine whether you have this ToolPak installed, click *Data* in Excel's menu across the top and look for *Data Analysis* in the *Analyze* section. If you don't see Data Analysis, you need to install it. Don't worry. It's free! To install Excel's Analysis Tookpak, click the *File* tab on the top-left and then click *Options* on the bottom-left. Then, click *Add-Ins*. On the *Manage* drop-down list, choose *Excel Add-ins*, and click *Go*. On the popup that appears, check *Analysis ToolPak* and click *OK*." (from statisticsbyjim.com)
- 3) Download from our Canvas course site onto the computer you bring to class these files: POSC 357 457 Dataset, POSC 357 457 Documentation for Dataset, and Excel Tips.
- 4) OPTIONAL: If you are not familiar with statistics in Excel, skim Excel Tips on our Canvas course site.

Part II. Health Challenges and Democracy's Impact

Monday, Jan. 31: Infectious and Chronic Diseases

Begin Wednesday's reading.

Wednesday, February 2: Democracy's Impact on Infectious and Chronic Diseases

Thomas J. Bollyky, Tara Templin, Matthew Cohen, Diana Schoder, Joseph L. Dieleman, and Simon Wigley. "The Relationships between Democratic Experience, Adult Health, and Cause-specific Mortality in 170 Countries between 1980 and 2016: An Observational Analysis." *The Lancet* 393, no. 10181 (2019): 1628-1640.

Kelly McMann and Daniel Tisch. "Accountable for Lives: Democratic Regimes and Epidemic Deaths." Article manuscript, 2021. You do not need to read the manuscript's appendix.

Monday, Feb. 7: Guidance about Mini-Designs and Group Investigations—Part 2

Wednesday, Feb. 9: Occupational Health and Safety

Monday, Feb. 14: Democracy's Impact on Occupational Health and Safety

Zhiyuan Wang. "Democracy, Policy Interdependence, and Labor Rights." *Political Research Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (September 2017): 549-563.

Dina Rosenberg and Olga Shvetsova. "Autocratic Health Versus Democratic Health: Different Outcome Variables for Health as a Factor Versus Health as a Right." In *The Political Economy of Social Choices*, edited by Maria Gallego and Norman Schofield, 1-20. New York: Springer, 2016.

Part III. Economic Challenges and Democracy's Impact

Wednesday, Feb. 16: Economic Growth

Monday, Feb. 21: Democracy's Impact on Economic Growth

Carl Henrik Knutsen. "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Survey of Arguments and Results." *International Area Studies Review* 15, no. 4 (December 2012): 393–415.

Carl Henrik Knutsen. "The Business Case for Democracy." V-Dem Working Paper, No. 111, October 2020.

Wednesday, Feb. 23: Economic Inequality

Monday, Feb. 28: Democracy's Impact on Economic Inequality

Daron Acemoglu, Suresh Naidu, Pascual Restrepo, and James A. Robinson. "Democracy, Redistribution, and Inequality." *Handbook of Income Distribution* 2 (2015): 1885-1966. Read "Introduction," 1886-1890. Read "Theoretical Considerations" for the main points only, 1890-1902. Read "Previous Literature," 1902-1909. Read "Conclusion," 1953-1955.

Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage. "Wealth Inequality and Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2017): 451-468.

Part IV. Environmental Challenges and Democracy's Impact

Wednesday, Mar. 2: Air Pollution

NO CLASS March 7, 9—Spring Break

Monday, Mar. 14: Democracy's Impact on Air Pollution

Thomas Bernauer and Vally Koubi. "Effects of Political Institutions on Air Quality." *Ecological Economics* 68, no. 5 (2009): 1355-1365. Note that a sentence seems to be missing between pages 1362 and 1363.

Seth Binder and Eric Neumayer. "Environmental Pressure Group Strength and Air Pollution: An Empirical Analysis." *Ecological Economics* 55, no. 4 (2005): 527-538.

Wednesday, Mar. 16: Global Warming

Monday, Mar. 21: Democracy's Impact on Global Warming

Bernauer, Thomas. "Climate Change Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16, no. 1 (2013): 421-448.

Michèle B. Bättig and Thomas Bernauer. "National Institutions and Global Public Goods: Are Democracies More Cooperative in Climate Change Policy?" *International Organization* 63, no. 2 (2009): 281-308.

Part V. Group Investigations

Due Tuesday, Mar. 22, 12:45 pm (afternoon): Research Idea

Wednesday, Mar. 23: Formation of Groups and Initial Planning

Due Sunday, Mar. 27, 12:45 pm (afternoon): Draft Research Question and Design

Monday, Mar. 28: Consultations with Professor McMann about research question and design.

A member of each group should sign up on behalf of the group [here](#). All members should attend the group's consultation. We will not meet as a class.

The consultation will be on Zoom. To join:

<https://cwru.zoom.us/j/98526058598?pwd=UGkzNXRlMTMweFpOR05ZUIRwK3FEZz09>
Meeting ID: 985 2605 8598; Passcode: 923291

In addition, a group may seek the input of the co-instructor with expertise in the outcome it is examining by requesting an appointment by email. This is optional. (Professor Gran, bkg2; Professor McCall, plm4; Professor Mulloy, kbm30; Professor Sheremeta, rms246; Professor Tisch, dxt37—all at case.edu)

Wednesday, Mar. 30: Initial Analysis.

Students will meet in their groups to work on their initial analysis. We will not meet as a class.

Monday, Apr. 4: Initial Analysis.

Students will meet in their groups to work on their initial analysis. We will not meet as a class.

Optional, additional consultation with Professor McMann can be scheduled by having one member of the group sign up on behalf of the group [here](#). The optional additional consultation will be on Zoom. To join:

<https://cwru.zoom.us/j/98526058598?pwd=UGkzNXRlMTMweFpOR05ZUIRwK3FEZz09>
Meeting ID: 985 2605 8598; Passcode: 923291

Wednesday, Apr. 6: Consultations with Professor McMann about the Analysis

A member of each group should sign up on behalf of the group [here](#). All members should attend the group's consultation. We will not meet as a class. The consultation will be on Zoom. To join:

<https://cwru.zoom.us/j/98526058598?pwd=UGkzNXRlMTMweFpOR05ZUIRwK3FEZz09>
Meeting ID: 985 2605 8598; Passcode: 923291

For the remaining class time, students will meet in their groups to work on both their analysis and infographics.

Due Sunday, Apr. 10, 12:45 pm (afternoon): Analysis

Monday, Apr. 11: Infographic

Students will meet in their groups to work on their infographics. We will not meet as a class.

Due Tuesday, Apr. 12, 12:45 pm (afternoon): Draft Infographic

Wednesday, Apr. 13: Infographic Revisions and Discussion Planning

Students will meet in their groups to revise their infographics and plan their discussion remarks. We will not meet as a class.

Thursday, Due Apr. 14, 12:45 pm (afternoon): Revised Infographic

Monday, Apr. 18: Practice Discussion

Wednesday, Apr. 20: Discussion with Practitioners

Due Monday, Apr. 25, 12:45 pm (afternoon): Graduate Research Paper

Monday, Apr. 25: Conclusion