Political Change: Evolution, Revolution, and Back

MA course (4 credits)
Fall semester, 2013.
Tuesday and Thursday, 9.00 – 10.40 am

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This course is designed to discuss different forms of political change from theoretical and historical-comparative perspective.

In the first part of the semester we examine general evolutionary forms of social change i.e. theories of modernization and development, which might precede political restructuration. Old and new modernization studies will be contrasted to old and new approaches in development, underdevelopment and dependency.

In the second part, we shall discuss revolutions in theoretical, historical, and comparative perspective. Comparative politics includes relational analysis of abrupt, violent, unexpected changes in the political structure of a society. We will discuss the major understandings and theories of the state in order to help conceptualizing revolution. Constitutionalist, Marxist, psychological, and functionalist approaches, just as mobilization, structuralist, and political culture theories of revolution will be analysed. When approaching political violence, notions such as palace revolution, coup, theories of internal and international war will also be discussed. The course will allow to focus on some case studies as well. We will use the opportunity of student presentations to discuss some empirical cases of revolutions or revolutionary movements.

Finally, in the third part of the semester, we shall cover non-violent forms of political change, and their social consequences. Transition and consolidation approaches will be critically discussed, together with the ideas of democracy promotion, processes of deconsolidation and the rise of hybrid regimes. The course concludes with discussions on civil resistance and disobedience with special attention of the domestic authoritarian and global, transnational contexts.

**Learning outcome:** Students will be able to distinguish between different forms of social change and political dynamics by familiarizing themselves both the theoretical and practical (i.e. policy) aspects of political change. They will be able to analyze political events of change in comparative and historical perspective.

**Grading** will be based on
- participation, activity, Periodic assignments (30%);
- periodic assignments, including an in-class test (30%);
- a final essay (minimum 10 pages long text without bibliography, 1.5-spaced) on a topic agreed upon with the professor. The paper should be handed in a print-out form, as well as electronically, by the last class (40%).
Topics and readings

WEEK 1. September 17, 19. Social Change I.: Classic Theories of Modernization and Development

Mandatory readings


Further readings

Samuel P. Huntington (1968), Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven: Yale University Press
Alvin Y. So (1990), Social Change and Development. London: Sage

**WEEK 2. September 24, 26**  
**Social Change II.: Theories of Dependency and World System**

**Mandatory readings**


**Further readings**


WEEK 3. October 1, 3. Theories of Revolution I.: Classic Approaches

Mandatory readings


Further readings

Melvin Richter (1966), „Tocqueville’s Contribution to the Theory of Revolution” in Carl J.

**WEEK 4.** October 8, 10. Theories of Revolution II.: Marxist, Functionalist, and Mobilization Approaches

**Mandatory readings**


**Further readings**


**WEEK 5.** October 15, 17. Theories of Revolution III. Comparative-Historical-Structural versus Agency-based Explanations

**Mandatory readings**

Theda Skocpol (1979), *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3-43.


**Further readings**


**WEEK 6.** October 22. Recent Debates on Revolution
October 24. Midterm exam

**Mandatory readings**


Further readings


WEEK 7. October 29, 31. Theories of Transition I.

Mandatory readings

Dankwart Rustow (1970), „Transitions to Democracy” Comparative Politics. April, 337-363.

Further readings

Juan J. Linz (1990), „Transitions to Democracy” Washington Quarterly. Summer, 143-164.
Larry Diamond (1990), „Beyond Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism: Strategies for


Samuel P. Huntington (1991), The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century. Norman: Oklahoma University Press


Theories of Transition II.

Mandatory readings


Further readings


Daniel V. Friedheim (1993), „Bringing Society Back into Democratic Transition Theory after


WEEK 9. November 12, 14. Democratic Consolidation

Mandatory readings


**Further readings**


**Mandatory readings**

November-December, 22-43.


**Further readings**


**WEEK II.** November 26, 28. **Civil Resistance in the International and Transnational Context**

**Mandatory readings**


Further readings

Gene Sharp (1973), The Politics of Nonviolent Action. Boston: P. Sargent Publisher

Mandatory readings


Further readings


