PO 127: The Struggle for Democracy  
Westmont College—Fall, 2005  
Europe Semester Elective Syllabus

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course description:

This is an upper division course dealing with the struggle to achieve and the challenge of maintaining democratic ideals, practices, and institutions in Eastern and Western Europe. This course is a logical extension of the Western Civilization courses featured on the Europe Semester.

The following questions will be addressed:

1. What is democracy and how do we measure its growth and efficacy?
2. What are the philosophical underpinnings of democratic thought and practice?
3. What are democracy’s preconditions?
4. What are the various processes or models of democratization found in Western and Eastern Europe?
5. How have selected nation-states coped with threats to democracy or democratic aspirations including war, autocratic regimes, and communism?
6. What are the respective challenges faced by both mature and emerging democracies?
7. To what extent does democratization in the European experience compare to the democratization experience in the United States?

In addition to the development of democracy in Western Europe, the course will focus on democratization developments in Russia, Poland, the former East Germany (Berlin), and the Czech Republic. While the Turkey itinerary emphasizes the New Testament world, we will conclude PO 127 by studying briefly Turkey’s approach to an officially secular yet Islamic democracy. Since Turkey sits culturally and geographically at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the Turkish model of governance is highly relevant to the region and to the United States.

Course Readings:

While the readings below will cover the regions of Western and Eastern Europe generally, particular attention is paid to nations on the 2005 Europe Semester itinerary. These readings combine a number of approaches including conceptual analyzes of political scientists as well as insights from political practitioners and foreign correspondents—all experts on both democratization and the regions they cover.
Course Pack: A brief selection of readings tailored to the 2005 itinerary. This reader will be distributed at LAX.

Texts (to be purchased online—Amazon, etc.—in early May)

Highly recommended (these two personal accounts of communism and its aftermath are brief, impressionistic, yet accurate, cheap, and fun to read):


**Course Requirements Summary**

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Book summaries of each text selected</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Topic paper</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>C. Leader paper</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Trip journal</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Class attendance/participation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Presentation of B and C to full group</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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**Requirement Details**

**A. During the summer:**

1. Prepare a narrative summary and reactions to each assigned text.
2. Write a six-page paper on an approved topic addressed in one of the books or chapters in the *Democracy After Communism* book.
3. Write a six-page profile of a pro-democracy reformer or leader—a political biography.

**B. On the trip:**

1. You will write a journal related to democracy related issues and experiences encountered on the trip. This journal will include reflections from class sessions, site visits and occasional interviews with nationals.
2. Occasional classes will feature discussions on the readings, site debriefings, and possible interactions with nationals and local experts.
3. You will present your brief papers to the entire group at relevant points in the itinerary.
C. Anticipated Site Visits

These sites include enduring institutions, legacies, and documents from mature democracies as well the locales and events that were pivotal in more recent democratization efforts.

London: Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, Parliament, Inns-of-Court, British Library (Magna Carta)
Amsterdam: Dutch Resistance Museum
St. Petersberg: Museum of Russian Political History
Moscow: State Historical Museum, White House, KGB Museum
Warsaw: Museum of Pawiak Prison
Berlin: Reichstag, Berlin Wall Museum and environs
Prague: Museum of Communism
Turkey sites: TBA
Plus related sights planned for the entire group

Topic Paper Ideas

The Role of Civil Society in Democratization
The Role of Religion in Democratization
The Role of Civic Education in Sustaining Democracy
Post-Communist Electoral Experience
The Velvet Revolution (Czech Republic case study)
The Role of Solidarity in Poland
Islam and Democracy: The Case of Turkey
Guided or Manipulated Democracy
The Persistence of Corruption in Post-Communist States
Democratic Reform and the EU
Press Freedom and Oppression in Post-Communist States
Why New Democracies Backslide

Leader/Political Biography Ideas

Mikhail Gorbachev [Russia]
Boris Yeltsin [Russia]
Lech Walesa [Poland]
Pope John Paul II [Poland]
Helmut Kohl [Germany]
Vaclav Havel [Czech Republic]
Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) [Turkey]