



Summer School 2023

Arab Democratization in the Age of Revolution

Dates: July 9- July 23, 2023

Purpose: The study of democratic transitions in this course deconstructs the problematic through local knowledge while also engaging global examples. It draws, critically and comparatively, from Latin American, Southern European and Latin American transitions. What should always renew attention to Arab transitions, as in this course, is also the popular postcolonial challenges, identity politics, moral questions about inclusiveness of all kinds of identities (gender-based, tribal, ethnic, religious, sectarian, and regional). Lectures supplemented by student-centered activities coach students into nuanced appreciation of the dynamics that drive as well as condition political transformation. Among the learning outcomes are critical grasp of diverse routes to democracy and evidence-based awareness of debates within and between transition theories. Critical engagement with these theories' seminal texts will take place through students' discussion, course readings, individual and group assessment, and study visits. Theoretically and empirically, the course highlights the complex nature of transitions as well as the distinct nature of Arab democratic processes.

Language of Instruction: English

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Note: While the course is delivered and assessed in English, international students will be encouraged to draw on readings in their own languages. This is enriching for the course and for the principal of pluralist knowledge.

Summary:

Demos-Center for Democratic Sustainability is pleased to launch the summer school on Tunisian and Arab "revolution," in cooperation with the Faculty of Literature, Arts, and Humanities of the University of Tunis-Manouba. The school covers an all-inclusive program of key theoretical readings, empirical accounts, and world-experience activities that combine the two. The modules taught deliver a well-rounded knowledge journey, which engages theory, experience and actual civic and political practitioners. That journey begins in Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, and home to some of the world's oldest centers of Arabo-Islamic learning. The program's three modules are delivered by leading scholars. In addition to class-room teaching-learning, fieldwork and encounters with civil society, media, political and activist figures and leaders, men and women, official and unofficial, will supplement knowledge imparted in the theoretical classes. The program delivers a most intellectually stimulating learning on theory, practice and on the latest revolutionary trends. Over two weeks of classes, debates, web-based activities, study visits and fieldwork tasks, the students enrolled in the program will be trained via constructivist methods that equip them with a knowledge foundation and skills suited to both graduate study and other career paths.

The summer school is open to international students. Enrolled participants shall have full access to reading materials, slides and handouts. Thus, the program will introduce and enhance learners' theoretical, empirical and critical grasp of the main questions concerning revolution, international and Arab. In so doing, the course leaders and tutors' chief aim is to meet learning outcomes such as:

1. Acquisition of a comprehensive regime of theories, concepts and readings on world and Arab democratization and revolutions
2. Enabling an intellectual competitive edge on comparative revolutions
3. Training participants into the relevant knowledge foundations of the subject matter, thus empowering them with the skills to navigate both academic and professional careers

This course explores the interactions of local and global political actors, ideas and institutions within specific international contexts, with stress on how they all open up channels, ideational and material for and against democratization. It is equipped with

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managing diversity of learning abilities and levels, catering for the needs of both undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students are assigned extra readings as well as more evaluative, interpretive, and critical assessment tasks. Undergraduate students are expected to learn rigorously and attain high levels of critical know-how.

Program Pedagogy

- Learners in this summer school program, will be mentored by highly-published scholars and specialists, with vast knowledge of Tunisian, Arab, and MENA politics, history, society, culture and language
- Students joining the program will be taught by university professors trained in Western and international universities, with a proven track-record in international universities
- Learners will be introduced to the field of knowledge with full induction into use of libraries, archives, institutions of learning, media and particularly press resources, cultural centres, and civil society organizations
- Participants will benefit from a combination of classroom teaching-learning and study visits that provide opportunity to appreciate links between theory and practice as well as direct experience of the field
- Enrolled learners will be aided by a pedagogy that equip them with research skills for MA and doctoral study, and in some case put graduate students on course for developing ideas and questions for their future research projects
- Students will be introduced to key texts by leading world, Arab and Tunisian scholars
- Students will be trained into mastering the art of conducting research, theoretically and empirically, in an engagingly friendly, creative and multicultural learning environment conducive to shared and constructivist student-centered learning
- Teachers and learners will be motivated into the practice and appreciation of discussion and exploration of ideas via multi-disciplinarity
- All participants will be guided into, and expected to commit to, the discovery of ideas through set tasks involving assessed field assignments aimed at practicing taught research methods such as use of interviews, in addition to focus group, participant observation and archival research techniques
- Participants will be aided in ways of relevance to their specialisms and/or career paths, be they in academic research or other fields in government, business or the media...
- Whilst doing the program, students will navigate Tunis as an ancient cosmopolitan city of learning through its libraries, museums, diverse environs and historic institutions as well as widen knowledge of the country via study visits to a number of cities with Islamic, Roman and Andalusian heritage

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Structure:

The program will consist of four mini-modules on the following topics:

1- Theories of democratic transition: Decolonizing Knowledge

Select readings from the world and the region will allow students to grasp the key theoretical, conceptual and methodological problems of democratic transition.

2- Empirical Exploration: Global Cases Studies vs. Local Experiences

A comparative look at democratic transitions, including third-wave of democratizations, that swept much of Southern and Latin America, Southern Mediterranean Europe, Eastern Europe and countries of the former Soviet Union, East Asia and Africa

3- Arab Democratic Openings: Top-down or Bottom-up?

A critical assessment of democratic progression and erosion, by reference to multiple experiences from the Arab region. This is aided by deconstruction of domestic and international contexts and dynamics of democratic openings (including US and EU democracy promotion) to assess whether they aimed for regime stabilization or genuine reform. Wide-ranging experiences will help understand the specificity of both Arab authoritarianism and democratization, by looking at catalysts and the restraints of regime change, the interplay of political and economic factors, and the scope of inclusiveness (e.g. relating to gender, region, ethnicity, etc.) in dynamics of change.

4- The Arab Spring Uprisings / *Hirak*: Democracy and Social Justice

A critical assessment of the journey of democracy and democratization in the context of the Arab Spring, this time driven by the Arab peoples' *hirak* (civic revolts and struggles). One component of the learning in this section concerns the interplay of revolt and democratization. A different type of people-driven agenda has complicated the democratic transition problematic: social justice, dignity, employment and freedom, both political and economic. This layer of complexity is challenging, theoretically and empirically. What kind of conclusions and evaluations can the class make about popular demands for dignity and inclusiveness in the socio-economic realm vs. democratization's classic priority of civil and political rights? Study visits to political parties, MPs, civil society groups, women and youth

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organizations, and actual activists shall provide an addendum and a forum for debating these challenges of Arab democratic transitions.

In addition, the course includes **Arabic Language Instruction**: one hour of Tunisian daily dialect instruction. This is 'live language' immersion for the purpose of navigating the culture and society.

Alongside the four modules will be **guided study trips of major political and cultural sites** in Tunis and Sousse (Zaytuna Mosque, Sadiqiyya School, Tunis Souq, Sousse Fort, etc.). Students will get a flavor of these Mediterranean cities at the crossroads of the Arabo-Islamic world and Southern Europe. They will come to appreciate the richness of architecture, history, urban life, the people, and the cuisine of cities steeped in centuries-old civilization and political activity.

Practicum & Research Methods

Through study visits/fieldwork (see below), this component of the summer school introduces students to methods and practices of political research. It places special emphasis on the execution of various qualitative methodologies *in the field* (e.g. through study trips). Thus, it serves as a complement to undergraduate and graduate research methods courses. The course will be divided into six topics: field research ethics, archival research in Tunisia, ethnography, Doing interviews in Tunisia & the Arab region, newspapers as a source of data, and gaining access to civil society. Each topic is covered through an interactive lecture, followed by a practical exercise through which students will be assessed.

Based on language competency and research background, students will, for example, be asked to conduct an interview; find documents on elections and democratization in an archive; conduct a focus group session; or hold a session with a civil society group and the value of of primary documents. While research ethics comprises its own topic, students will be sensitized to the ethical challenges and dilemmas that arise in each of the methodologies covered. Particular stress is placed on the ethics of doing field research in a different (non-Western) cultural setting, from researcher-researched power disparities to dealing with interlocutors to treatment of primary data source material and the politics of translation. Students will be primed to value local knowledge in all its forms, and instructed in the appropriate method to collect, (co)produce, and analyze such knowledge.

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Learning Beyond the Classroom: Study visits as Components of the Fieldwork

The study visits constitute a vital component of the summer school program. This is geared to maximize constructivist learning that is reflective, creative and interactive. For, it revolves around motivated learners exploring knowledge through independent thinking and peer and self-instruction. The practicum and research methods component is linked to these practical ‘fieldwork’ experiences.

Study visits rely on driven and motivated learners who are required to measure to up to the rigor of the diverse activities by:

1. Participation in all study visits scheduled for this module
2. Note down the learning acquired in each activity
3. Complete assessed tasks (see below)

The study visits shall involve diverse activities in Tunis, and/or environs, or a different city.

Date (TBA)	Fieldwork / Practicum Activity
	UGTT
	Democratic Women’s Group
	Ennahda Party
	MPs from the Constitutive Assembly of 2011
	Centrist and Social-Democratic Parties (e.g. Ettakatol and Al-Tayyar Al-Dimuqrati)
	Al-Bawsala and Murakiboun (Civil Society Watchdogs)
	Tunisian Human Rights League
	MPs from the 2019 Parliament
	Sabah Newspaper
	Tunisia’s Democracy Museum
	Tunisia’s Electoral Commission



Schedule: Monday-Friday Classes: 8:30-12:00

Study Visits: 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Saturdays (July 15th and July 22nd): Day-long study trip

Fees: \$2100 per student. This includes:

- Instruction
- Accommodation
- Breakfast
- Local transportation to tour/study sites

Assessment: Course instructors will use a combination of student-designed and traditional forms of assessment. These include:

1. **Short reports** based on field work activities
2. **Interview assignment:** field-work assessment where students interview a member of civil society, an academic, or a politician, etc.
3. **Annotated bibliography**
4. **Presentation** or a short podcast about some aspect of a course theme and/or fieldwork

Certificate: Upon completion of the course, students will be granted an official certificate.

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