

### **POS 4931 Politics & the Armed Forces**

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday 10:40 AM-11.30 AM  
Thursday 10:40 AM to 12:35 PM

Class Venue: AND 0034

Instructor: Dr. Sebastian Elischer  
Office: AND 212

Office Hours: Wednesday: 4 PM-6 PM  
Thursday: 2 PM-3 PM

Email: selischer@ufl.edu

#### **Seminar Description**

The subordination of military forces to democratic civilian rule occupies a central space in comparative politics and can be seen as one of the oldest problems of human governance. Whether and how a society controls those who possess the ultimate power of physical coercion and ensures their loyalty those in power is essential to democratic governance. Civilian control of the military is of concern in established democracies such as the United States, but even more so in the many nascent democracies of Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Arab world. Governments of these young or less institutionalized democracies must ensure that the military – often the previous holder of power – will not stage a coup or otherwise defy their effective power to govern. In many of these so-called “praetorian” countries the military remains deeply involved in politics through informal channels. The focus of the class is on civil-military relations in young democracies. It discusses the key concepts of civil-military scholarship and applies these concepts to a diverse set of empirical cases from across the globe. At the heart of the seminar are the following questions: a) What does the concept of civilian democratic control entail? b) What are the major challenges in ensuring the democratic control of the armed forces? c) Which factors cause the military to overthrow democratically elected governments? d) What are the long-term political and economic consequences of military coups and military rule?

#### **Requirements, Assignments and Grading**

You will need to read the assigned material for each week and come to class prepared. I expect students to attend all classes and participate in all class discussions. If you cannot make it to class please let me know prior to the class which you cannot attend. If this is not possible, please contact me as soon as you can.

There are several assignments in this class that together make up your final grade.

1. Regular *attendance and active participation* in class. If you miss more than two classes without a reasonable excuse, your grade will suffer. For what constitutes a reasonable excuse, please consult UF attendance policies (see further below). Regular attendance and participation account for **10% of your final grade**.
2. One *group presentation* in class (as part of a group of 3 students; the presentation should last no longer than 25 minutes) on a topic related to the weekly readings. I strongly encourage you to discuss the content of your presentation with me during my office

hours two weeks prior to the presentation. The group presentation accounts for **20% of your final grade**. All group presentations take place on Thursdays. The first student presentation takes place on September 28. We will divide everyone into groups during the first two weeks of class.

3. One *midterm*. The midterm account for **25% of your final grade**. The midterm takes place on **September 26**. I will provide details about the content and the modalities of the midterm in class in the weeks prior to the exam.
4. One *independent reading assignment*. I will upload excerpts from a key study in civil-military relations. Students have one week to read the text and take notes before taking an online exam featuring questions covering the content of the excerpts. The independent reading assignment accounts for **15% of your final grade**. The independent reading assignment takes place on **November 2**. I will provide details about the content and the modalities of this assignment in class.
5. One *independent research assignment*. The research assignment is due **on December 11 at 11:59 PM** and accounts for **30% of your final grade**. You will research the aftermath of three military coups that occurred at some point after 1950 and code the aftermath of those coups based on a coding template that we will discuss in class in the weeks prior to the assignment. I will provide further information about this assignment in class.

#### Composition of final grade

Active participation: 10%

Group presentation: 20%

Midterm: 25%

Independent reading assignment: 15%

Final research assignment: 30%

#### **Grading scale**

A	91 or above	B	81-84
A-	88-90	B-	78-80
B+	85-87	C+	75-77

#### **UF Attendance Policies**

Students may only participate in classes if they are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors.

Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences count from the first-class meeting.

Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class, or any required class activity must inform the instructor as early as possible prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit.

### **Health and Wellness**

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

### **Policies on Persons with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. It will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Anyone with a disability should feel free to see me during office hours to make the necessary arrangements.

### **Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Policy on Late Assignments**

I understand that sometimes there are reasons why an assignment cannot be handed in on time. If you see such a situation emerging please contact me *prior to the deadline* of the assignment.

### **Books**

There is no textbook for this class. I will upload the required reading for each week.

## Class Calendar

Any of the sessions may be subject to change

To follow the discussions in class please do the readings prior to the Tuesday meeting

### Week 1, August 24: Getting Started

Organizational meetings: getting to know each other, expectations and assignments, discussion of syllabus, effective use of the library, key concepts and topics of civil-military relations.

### Week 2, August 29 (no class on August 31): Getting Started II

Further discussion of the various assignments.

Brooks, Risa (2019). Integrating the Civil-Military Relations Subfield. *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 379-398.

### Week 3, September 5 and 7: Getting Concepts Right: Democratic Civilian Control of the Armed Forces and the Study of Civil-Military Relations I

We discuss basic definitions of democracy and review the so-called “third wave of democratization”.

Kohn, Richard (1997). How Democracies Control the Military. *Journal of Democracy* 8 (4): 140-153.

Samuel Huntington (1991). *The Third Wave of Democracy*. USA: University of Oklahoma Press, p. 231-252.

Croissant, Aurel, David Kuehn, Paul W Chambers and Siegfried Wolf (2011). Beyond the Fallacy of Coup-ism: Conceptualizing Civil-Military Relations in Emerging Democracies. *European Political Science* 10: 137-145.

### Week 4, September 12 and 14: Civilian Control in the United States I

We examine highly influential studies on civil-military relations in the United States. Although some of these texts were written decades ago, they continue to shape the thinking behind the role of the military in new democracies.

Huntington, Samuel (1957): *The Soldier and the State. The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Belknap. I will upload the required chapters.

“The Civil-Military Industrial Complex.” Speech by President Dwight Eisenhower (youtube video). We will watch this video in class.

Feaver, P. D. (1996). The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control. *Armed Forces & Society*, 23(2), 149–178.

### Week 5, September 19 and 21: Civilian Control in the United States II

Krebs, R., Ralston, R., & Rapport, A. (2023). No Right to Be Wrong: What Americans Think about Civil-Military Relations. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(2), 606-624.

Feaver, Peter (2023). *Thanks for Your Service. The Causes and Consequences of Public Confidence in the US Military*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. I will upload the required chapters.

Jessica D. Blankshain (2020). A Primer on US Civil–Military Relations for National Security Practitioners. *Wild Blue Younger*, 6 July 2020.

### **Week 6, September 26 and 28: Civilian Control in Young Nations**

We examine why the armed forces overthrow democratically elected regimes and the factors that make countries susceptible to military coups.

Powell, Jonathan and Thyne, Clayton (2011). Global Instance of Coups from 1950 to 2010. *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (2): 249-259.

Kuehn, David (2017). Midwives or Gravediggers of Democracy? The Military's Impact on Democratic Development. *Democratization* 25 (5): 783-800.

*On September 26, the first test takes place covering the material we discuss during Week 1 and Week 5! Please note that student presentations start on September 28.*

### **Week 7, October 3 and 5: Coups and Their Causes. Empirical Evidence from Across the World**

Building on last week's class we examine several countries, which have experienced military coups. The class on October 5 is dedicated to four student presentations covering military coups between 1950 and 2023.

Elischer, Sebastian, & Lawrance, Benjamin (2022). Reassessing Africa's New Post-Coup Landscape. *African Studies Review*, 65(1).

Day, Christopher, Khisa, Moses and Reno, William (2020). Revisiting the Civil-Military Conundrum in Africa. *Civil Wars* 22 (2-3): 156-173.

### **Week 8, October 10 and 12: The Military as Pillar of Autocratic Rule**

Many autocratic governments are led by civilian rulers. These rulers and their personalized regimes often rely on the military to remain in power. We examine several prominent cases.

Cook, Steven (2007). *Ruling but Not Governing. The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria and Turkey*. USA: Johns Hopkins University Press, Chapter 1, 2 and 6.

Bünthe, M. (2022). Ruling but not Governing: Tutelary Regimes and the Case of Myanmar. *Government and Opposition*, 57(2), 336-352.

Eelco van der Maat & Arthur Holmes (2023) The Puzzle of Genocidal Democratization: Military Rivalry and Atrocity in Myanmar, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 25:2, 172-194.

### **Week 9, October 17 and 19: The Challenges of Rebuilding Democratic Civilian Rule**

Over the last 25 years many former military dictatorships underwent democratic transitions. The removal of the armed forces from power is a challenging task for incoming democratic governments. We analyze some of these challenges.

Hunter, Wendy (1998). Negotiating Civil-Military Relations in Post-Authoritarian Argentina and Chile. *International Studies Quarterly* 42 (2): 295-317.

Pion-Berlin, David and Acacio, Igor (2020). The Return of the Latin American Military? *Journal of Democracy* 31 (4): 151-165.

**Week 10, October 24 and 26: Successful Democratization and its Effect on Civil-Military Relations**

The re-establishment of democratic rule after years or decades of military dictatorship is challenging but not impossible. We discuss the effect of democratization on civil-military relations in countries where democratization has been successful.

Clark, John (2007): The Decline of the African Military Coup. *Journal of Democracy* 18 (3): 141-155.

Lehoucq, Fabrice and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán (2014). Breaking Out of the Coup Trap Political Competition and Military Coups in Latin America. *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (8): 1105-1129.

**Week 11, October 31 and November 2: Independent Reading Assignment**

*There is no class this week.* Students will read extracts from a study on civil-military relations on their own. The assignment takes place on Thursday, November 2. Further information will be provided in the weeks prior to the assignment.

**Week 12 and 13: November 7 and 9: The Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring has changed the global geostrategic landscape. We examine the role of Arab armies in facilitating and in countering democratic transitions.

Lutterbeck, Derek (2013). Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil–Military Relations. *Armed Forces & Society* 39 (1): 28-52.

Nepstad, Sharon (2013): Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria. *Journal of Peace Research* 50 (3): 337-349.

**Week 14, November 14 and 16: The Arab Spring Ten Years After**

Gaub, Florence (2017). *Guardians of the Arab State. When Militaries Intervene in Politics, from Iraq to Mauritania.* New York: Oxford University Press, p.1-50 and 162-180.

Volpi, F. (2020). Algeria: When Elections Hurt Democracy. *Journal of Democracy* 31(2), 152-165.

Masoud, T. (2021). The Arab Spring at 10: Kings or People? *Journal of Democracy* 32(1), 139-154.

**Week 15: November 21 (no class on November 23): Coups and Democratization**

A prominent assumption in the literature is that military coups lead to military dictatorship and thus to autocratic rule. More recent research, however, argues that coups can lead to different outcomes.

Sebastian Elischer & Justin Hoyle (2023) Electoral contests in the aftermath of military coups: how domestic constraints motivate praetorian conduct, *Contemporary Politics*, online first.

**Week 16: November 28 and 30: Time to work on your final research assignment**

**Week 17: December 5: Time work on your final research assignment**

*The final research assignment is due on Monday, December 11 at 11:59 PM.*