GOV 94gs: GLOBALIZATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

On many fronts, civil society today is under siege, and globalization itself is under attack. But civil society arose and survives in the face of obstacles. The seminar looks at the rise of civil society worldwide in its many manifestations, including social movements, interest associations, development and environmental NGOs, and transborder networks, in democratic, quasi-democratic, and authoritarian systems. Among the topics: how civil society arose historically and its relation to the state, market, and family; “imperfect” civil societies; religious groups as civil society actors; the role of civil society actors in democratic transitions and reform; state responses to civil society; how international NGOs and other transborder actors operate; and social media as a tool of civil society and its opponents. We examine empirical cases in the U.S., Europe, the US, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China, and other parts of the world.

There are no prerequisites. Space permitting, students from Social Studies, EAS, and other concentrations may join. Graduate students are not permitted to take Gov Department junior seminars. Auditing is not permitted.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation: 45% (including two response papers and oral presentation in final Workshop)

Written work:
Short Paper 15% (5-6 pp) based on any week’s readings by Week 6 (Mar 1).
Long Paper 40% (20 pp). Prospectus due by Week 7 (Mar 8); the revised, extended prospectus due Mar 29; final paper due May 4.

The long paper should explore a puzzle relating in some way to civil society. It may be conceptual (civil society in Islamic thought) or examine a puzzle in the context of one country (accounting for NRA success in the US; new forms of party control of the Internet in China), several countries, or an international context.

Readings: Required readings are available on the course site, either as PDFs or as links.
WEEK 1 -- INTRODUCTION (1/25)

WEEK 2 – THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY (2/1)

What is civil society? What have leading thinkers meant by the term, and where do they agree and disagree. Historically speaking, when and why did the concept come into vogue, fall out of favor, and then regain traction? According to key scholars, what types of groups and activities are included in conceptions of civil society, and which should be excluded? Are there conditions prerequisites for a country to be considered to have a civil society? Look closely at concepts such as “modularity,” the “tyranny of cousins”, and the notion of “enemies” of civil society. How is the concept of public sphere related to the idea of civil society, and what are the problems inherent in the notion of there being a single public sphere in any given country?


WEEK 3 – DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY (2/8)

What is the relationship between civil society and democracy? Is civil society a precondition for democracy, or must democracy come first? Can civil society harm democracy, and if so, under what conditions?


WEEK 4 – ROBUST OR ILL? CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN AMERICA (2/15)

What are the fundamental disagreements that exist among scholars about the nature of civil society in America, past and present, and how can we account for them? Looking at the American experience, how do war, ethnicity, and the nature of the state configure the civil societies we get, and affect how they change over time? Civil society under the Trump Administration: how is it faring?


WEEK 5 -- THE RISE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN EUROPE (2/22)

REMINDER: You need to turn in the Short Paper by Week 6.

What were the critical conditions/junctures in the rise of civil society in key countries in Western Europe, and in the 1970s and 1980s, East and Central Europe. Are there distinct pathways in the development of civil societies, and if so, identify and characterize several from the readings. In the same way that there are, arguably, varieties of capitalism, are there varieties of civil societies, and if so, on what dimensions do they diverge? “The idea of a ‘public sphere’ is a lot of hype. It can just mean tyranny by another name.” What is the basis for such a claim, and do you agree or disagree, and why?


WEEK 6 – THE EMERGENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ASIA: JAPAN (3/1)

To what extent did prewar Japan have something that could be considered a civil society, and how has Japan’s particular civic legacy shaped the nature of civil society in today’s Japan? By many measures Japan is one of the most highly educated, prosperous, and post-postmodern of societies on the face of the globe, and yet its civil society has numerous distinct features. How do we account for this variation?


Freeman, Laurie Anne. (2003). Mobilizing and Demobilizing the Japanese Public Sphere: Mass Media and the Internet in Japan. In Schwartz, Frank and Susan J. Pharr, (Eds.), The State of Civil Society in Japan. Cambridge University Press, pp. 235-43. *(Note: only these pages)*


WEEK 7 – CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS: KOREA AND TAIWAN (3/8)

In both nations, various citizens’ groups were on the scene at the time of the countries’ respective democratic transitions in 1987, but their role in the changes that occurred differed significantly by most accounts. Why? How does the nature of civil society and of the state affect outcomes? How does pre-transition civil society affect post-transition civil society?


**SPRING BREAK—3/10-3/18**

**WEEK 8—CIVIL SOCIETY IN CHINA (3/22)**

What could be the basis for a claim that China today has a civil society in the making, and if so, how can we account for its rise? What are the counterarguments?


Ho, Peter. (2001). “Greening Without Conflict? Environmentalism, NGOs and Civil Society in China.” *Development and Change* 32, pp. 913-918. *(Note: only these pages.)*


**WEEK 9 – INGOS, DOMESTIC NGOS, AND THE EMERGENCE OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY (3/29)**

*Revised prospectuses due.*

*What is an NGO in relation to conceptions of civil society? What are the comparative advantages of, and limits on, INGOs as agents of change? Is a global civil society emerging, and if so, who are its “citizens” and to whom are they accountable?*


**WEEK 10 – SPECIAL SESSION: CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER SEIGE (4/5) Student reports. Readings to be assigned**
WEEK 11 – SPECIAL SESSION: SOCIAL MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY (4/12). Student reports.


WEEK 12— WORKSHOP (student presentations based on work in progress) (4/19) LAST CLASS

Note: Final papers are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, May 4. Email to the instructor (cc: Nina Coomes), and submit in hardcopy at the office of Nina Coomes, CGIS South, Room S240.