

Semester Fall 08 **CRN:** 14174 **Title:** Intro Research Process/ Social Sciences
Course Info: INCO 501H 01 **Number of Credits:** 2
Days/Times: W 1:40-3pm **Instructor(s):** Johnson/Malone **Room:** HORT 325

How do dictatorships become democracies? Today we hear politicians, pundits, and the public grapple with this question, as the United States struggles to guide democratization in Afghanistan and Iraq. This question is far from new, however. The United States first became preoccupied with turning dictatorships into democracies in the 1940s, as it strived to reconstruct Germany and Japan. In the 1980s and 1990s, we witnessed democracies arising from dictatorships around the world, particularly in Latin America and Eastern Europe. As we contemplate the future of democracy in the Middle East, we find that there is a great deal of theoretical and empirical evidence to guide our understanding of what turns dictators into democrats.

In this course, students will learn how to use this vast array of theoretical and empirical evidence to formulate their own research questions, as well as design studies to answer their questions well. Students will study the dynamics of regime change, and in doing so, learn how to use social science methods to investigate the process of democratization. This course focuses on the art of posing and unpacking research questions and exploring appropriate bibliographic sources. The immediate goal of this course is to prepare students for their Honors Theses and other independent research endeavors. However, this course also has a broader goal, in that it aims to provide students with a basic understanding of social science research, a skill that will be useful in future academic and professional endeavors. The skills involved in formulating a research question and design are the same that students will use in many settings – such as jobs in business, government, or academia.