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Office Hours: Wed 1-3pm (or by apt)

Wesleyan University
Spring 2018
T.R 8:50-10:10am
Location: PAC421

GOV157
DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP: POLITICS IN THE
CONTEMPORARY WORLD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the field of comparative politics. The study of comparative politics is about the practice of politics *within* countries. The course provides a framework for comparing the practice and process of politics within and across countries. We focus on questions such as: Why do States exist? How do authoritarian leaders gain and maintain power? When do citizens take to the streets to demand change? Why do civil wars break out, and why do people participate in violence? Why are some countries wealthy while others remain poor? What are the benefit and limits of foreign aid? In exploring these questions and themes, we will examine and critically evaluate several different approaches to politics. The course draws on case studies from different regions and historical periods to ground students in the tools of comparative analysis. Students will gain the ability to analyze contemporary political systems, and the underlying factors that help us explain divergences between countries across the world.

Required Book: [*Essentials of Comparative Politics*](#), by Patrick H. O'Neil (6th Edition)

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date
Class Participation & Attendance	15	
Country Essay 1	15	3/27
Country Essay 2	15	Fri, 5/4
In-Class Midterm	25	4/3
Take-Home Final Exam	30	5/16

1. Participation

Students are expected to attend and participate actively in each class. Emphasis will be placed on quality of participation, including responses to the instructor's questions about the readings, as well as the thoughtfulness with which the student engages with other classmates. Students are allowed two unexcused absences.

2. Country Essays

On the first day of class, you will randomly receive a country. This country is the country that you will write each of your two “Country Essays.” These essays must incorporate readings and debates covered in class. In addition, I strongly encourage students to incorporate other forms of data as a way to emphasize or demonstrate trends over time, between countries or within a particular country. We will refer to several data sets in this class (e.g. V-Dem, Freedom House). I’ve also provided a list of useful datasets on democracy and development on the last page of this syllabus. Each essay should be **4-5 pages** (12 pt. font, TNR, double-spaced) and will focus on the following two themes:

- Essay 1- Regime Type or Challenges of Regime Transition (due 3/27)
- Essay 2- Challenges of development and distribution (due 5/4)

Essays are due at the beginning of class via Moodle (unless otherwise specified).

3. Midterm Exam:

The mid-term will take place in-class on **Tues, 4/3** and will include a combination of identification questions (very short-essays) and one longer essay.

4. Final take-home exam:

COURSE POLICIES

- a) Students are expected to complete all readings, attend all classes, and participate actively. All assignment must be turned in before class via Moodle. Extensions and incompletes will not be granted under any circumstances other than significant and verifiable personal emergencies or other extenuating circumstances. In such cases, please provide documentation from your class dean or health care professional.
- b) **Do not plagiarize.** You must properly cite all your sources. Please consult a reference librarian, someone at the Writing Workshop, or ask me if you have any questions about sources and citations. Failure to cite properly is a form of plagiarism. You must adhere to all aspects of the Wesleyan Honor Code.
- c) **Use of Electronics.** Laptops, tablets, & cellphones are not permitted in class (without permission). If you must make/receive an emergency call, please go outside.

READINGS

- Note: Readings marked with (*) indicate that the reading is recommended, but not required. “*Essentials*” denotes the course textbook: [*Essentials of Comparative Politics*](#).
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I. Introduction to Comparative Politics

THURS: 1/25

Introduction to the course: Why study comparative politics?

TUES: 1/30

What is comparative politics?

- Chapter 1 (*Essentials*)
- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown Business (Chap 1).
- * Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation."

II. States

THURS: 2/1

Foundations of State Building

- Chapter 2 (*Essentials*). States
- Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990*, Chapter 1. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing

TUES: 2/6

Early and Late State-Building

- Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Chap 1)
- "Middle Eastern State Building," (2017) *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20:487–504
- Max Fischer and Amanda Taub, "[Building a Mini-State with Avocados and Guns](#)," *The New York Times*, Jan 18 2018.

III. Democratic Politics and Regimes

What is democracy? How do we identify a democratic regime?

THURS: 2/8

Defining and Measuring Democracy

- Philippe Schmitter & Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...And is Not," *Journal of Democracy*. p. 67 – 73.
- Robert Dahl, *On Democracy*, 36-61
- Amartya Sen. 1999. "Democracy as a Universal Value," *Journal of Democracy*, 10(3): 3-17.

TUES: 2/13

Types of Democratic Systems

- Chapter 5 (*Essentials*): "Democratic Regimes" (pp. 146-149).

- Norris, Pippa. 1997. "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems." *International Political Science Review*, 18(3):297-312.
- * Lindberg et al. 2014. "V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, 25 (3): 159-169.

IV. Non-Democratic Regimes

THURS: 2/15

Fascism & Totalitarianism

- Chapter 6 (Essentials). Non-Democratic Regimes (pgs. 172-189)
- Berman, Sheri (1997) "Civil Society and the collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49(3): 401-429.

TUES: 2/20

Communist Regimes

- Chap 9, *Essentials* (266-293)
- Martin K. Dimitrov (ed.) (2013), *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chap 4: "Ideological Introversion and Regime Survival: North Korea's "Our-Style Socialism").

THURS: 2/22

Rentier States and Oligarchies in the Middle East

- Chapter 6 (Essentials). Non-Democratic Regimes (pgs. 191-200)
- Bellin, Eva (2012) "The Robustness of Authoritarianism Reconsidered: Lessons of the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44(2): 127-149.
- * Ross, Michael. 2012. *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3.

TUES: 2/27

Competitive Authoritarianism

- Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2002. "The rise of competitive authoritarianism." *Journal of democracy* 13(2): 51-65.
- Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes," *World Politics*, v.63, no.1, January 2010, pp.43-86. [44]
- * Weyland, Kurt (2013) "[Latin America's Authoritarian Drift: The Threat from the Populist Left.](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 24(3): 18-32.

- * Gandhi, Jennifer, and Ellen Lust-Okar. 2009. "Elections under authoritarianism." *Annual review of political science* 12: 403-422. .

V. Regime Change and Democratization

Why have some countries democratized and others have not? How do countries democratize?

THURS: 3/1

"Triggers" of Change?

- Chapter 5, *Essentials* (pgs. 141-145).
- Brownlee, Jason. 2009. "Harbinger of Democracy: Competitive Elections Before the End of Authoritarianism." In Lindberg, Staffan (ed), *Democratization by Elections*.
- Berman, Sheri. 2007. "Lessons from Europe." *Journal of Democracy* 18(1): 28-41.

TUES: 3/6

Civil Society and Social Capital

- Way, Lucan. 2014 "Civil Society and Democratization." *Journal of Democracy* 25(3): 35-43.
- Robert Putnam. 1993. "What Makes Democracy Work?" *National Civic Review* (Spring)
- [The Social Experiment Facebook Should Run](#), *The Atlantic*, Oct 7 2017.

THURS: 3/8

Violent Pathways and Foreign Intervention

- Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "The Perilous Path to the Democratic Peace," *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (MIT: 2005): 1-20.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2001. "An Insurgent Path to Democratic Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests, and Regime Transition in South Africa and El Salvador." *Comparative Political Studies*, 34(8): 862-888.
- * Goodwin, Jeff. 2001. *No other way out: states and revolutionary movements, 1945-1991*. Cambridge University Press (Chap 1).

[Spring Break: 3/9-3/26]

VI. Social Movements and Collective Action

TUES: 3/27

Theories of Collective Action and Claim Making

- Tilly, Charles and Sidney Tarrow. *Contentious Politics*. Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1-2)

- Chenoweth, Erica. “People Are in the Streets Protesting Donald Trump. But When Does Protest Actually Work?” *The Washington Post*. November 21, 2016.
- * Simmons, Erica. 2016. *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4 (“Corn in Mexico”)

THURS: 3/29

Protest Politics in the 21st Century: Case studies from the Arab Spring

- [Living in Tunisia](#) (2011)
- [Tunisia: In Sun and Shadow](#)
- Scott Anderson, “[Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart](#).”
- Anderson, Lisa. 2011. [Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt and Libya](#),” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (3), pp. 2-7.

➤ Film Showing: [The Square](#) (2013)

Recommended:

- * Masoud, Tarek. 2015. ‘[Has the Door slammed on Arab democracy?](#)’ *Journal of Democracy*. 21(5).
- * Dina Shehata, “The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak’s Regime Came to an End,” *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 2011), pp. 26-32.
- * Film, [How Facebook Changed the World](#) (BBC, 2012)

TUES 4/3:

MID-TERM EXAM

THURS 4/5: - No Class

VII. Democratic Erosion & the Persistence of Authoritarianism

TUES: 4/10

- Steven Levitsky & Daniel Ziblatt. “[Opinion: This is How Democracies Die](#),” *The Guardian*, 21 Jan 2018.
- Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. “On Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): pp. 5-19.
- Norris, Pippa (2017) “[Is Western Democracy Backsliding? Diagnosing the Risks](#).” Forthcoming, *Journal of Democracy*.

Suggested:

- Levitsky, Steven & Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die: What History Reveals About Our Future*. Crown Publishers.

THURS: 4/12

Elections: Easier said than done

- Flores, Thomas E., & Irfan Nooruddin. *Elections in Hard Times: Building Stronger Democracies in the 21st Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2016 (Chap 1-2)
- [Kenya is set to hold one of the most expensive elections in Africa](#)
- [Low Turnout in Kenya's do-over Election Raises Concerns](#)

VIII. The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism

How do politics, culture, and identities shape one another?

TUES: 4/17

Concepts and forms of group identity

- Chapter 3 (*Essentials*), pgs. 66-81
- Samuel Huntington. 1993. "Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3): 22-49

THURS: 4/19

Theories of Groupness and Identity

- Kanchan Chandra. 2006. "What is ethnic identity and does it matter?" *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 9: 397-424.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2006. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Chapter 2, "Beyond Identity").

IV. Political Violence

What is political violence? Why do leaders use violence? Why do ordinary people participate?

TUES: 4/24

Overview of Political Violence and Civil War

- Chap 7, *Essentials*, "Political Violence" (pgs. 204-217)
- Laitin, David D. *Nations, states, and violence*. Oxford University Press, 2007. (Chap 1: "The Pandemonium")

THURS: 4/26

Theorizing The Escalation and Occurrence of Violence

- Straus, Scott. 2015. *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership and Genocide in Modern Africa*: Cornell University Press. Chap 3, "A Theory of Genocide."
- Petersen, Roger D. 2002. *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 2).

Suggested:

- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2008. "The social processes of civil war: The wartime transformation of social networks." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 11: 539-561

V. The Politics of Development

When do states promote development? How do governments allocate resources & distribute goods among the population?

TUES: 5/1

Political Economy: Concepts & Theories

- Chap 4, *Essentials*, pgs. 96-109; 118-122.
- Chap 10, *Essentials*, pgs. 308-325.

THURS: 5/3

Political Economy of Development: Why are some countries wealthy while others remain poor?

- McGuire, James. 2016. "The Politics of Development in Latin America and East Asia," *The Oxford Handbook of Politics and Development*, pp. 1-38.
- Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. Chapter 3.

TUES: 5/8

Where do we go from here? Institutions and prospects for democracy and development

- Chap 11, *Essentials*, pgs. 356-366
- Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, Chapter 13: "Why Nations Fail Today."
- Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, Chapter 15: "Understanding Prosperity & Poverty."

Take-Home Final Exam: Distributed at 8am 5/15, Due 5/16 @11:59pm

Useful Datasets:

- [Afrobarometer](#)
- [Arabbarometer](#)
- [Eurobarometer](#)
- [Latin America Public Opinion Project](#)
- [World Values Survey](#)
- [Freedom House](#)
- [Polity country reports](#)
- [Democracy Barometer](#)
- [World Bank Data](#)
- [IFES \(International Foundation for Electoral Systems\)](#) and their election guide
- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)

- [Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#)
- [Comparative Study of Electoral Systems](#)
- [Uppsala Conflict Data Program](#)
- [Varieties of Democracy](#)
- [Social Conflict Analysis Database](#)
- [Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project](#)
- [Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System Online](#)
- [Quality of Governance Dataset](#)
- [Women in Public Service Positions](#)
- [Global Terrorism Database](#)
- [Terrorist Organization Profiles Database](#)