

## DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP: POLITICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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- ASSESSMENT:
- 1) Mid-term test in class on March 5. [20 points]
  - 2) Three 5-7 page assignments due on Feb 20, April 3 and May 5. [20 points each]
  - 3) Final examination on Tuesday May 12 at 9.00. [20 points]
  - 4) Extra credit – a 1-2 page report on outside lectures – and occasional quizzes [5 points]

Students are required to attend every class and to complete the required reading.  
Do not use a laptop to surf the web or check email during class.

Beware of plagiarism i.e. using material not written by yourself and without clear attribution to the source.  
Always include “quotation marks” if you copy material from a website or other source.

### GOALS OF THE COURSE

The world’s political systems are increasingly polarized between winners and losers, between countries that have ‘made it’ into liberal democracy and market capitalism, and those that remain mired in poverty, stagnation, inequality and war. However, there is growing skepticism about whether democracy is a cure-all solution. Only by studying individual countries can we understand the variety of political and economic systems and the complexity of the modern world, despite the homogenizing process of globalization.

To get up to speed on contemporary events students should read the international section of the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* every day. They are available free on the web (nytimes.com and washingtonpost.com).

This course aims to provide you with a conceptual framework, a box of tools in order to help answer the question of *who rules*, and *how*, in each of the world’s 196 countries. In fact you will be offered three theoretical frameworks, prisms through which to view the world. Each of these theories is *both* descriptive and normative - they both describe the world and make a value judgment about what is right and wrong.

- The three theories are:
- 1) Liberal democracy or pluralism,
  - 2) Marxism and the theory of imperialism, and
  - 3) Elite theory

We will try to survey the whole range of political systems currently in operation, looking at the First World (Europe and Japan), what used to be the Second World (Russia and China), and the Third World (Egypt, India, South Africa). The goal is to learn how to grasp the unique historical, cultural and institutional factors that are key to understanding the political dynamics of a given country.

Note that this course is *Comparative Politics*, focusing on political process *within* a given country. A different field of political science, *International Relations*, deals with global issues and institutions that go beyond a state’s borders.

## READINGS

Required books:	Jeff Kopstein & Mark Lichbach (eds)	<i>Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities and Institutions</i> (Fourth Edition: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
	Karl Marx & F. Engels	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (Signet Classic edition, 1998)
	James Galvin	<i>The Arab Uprisings</i> (Oxford University Press, 2012)
	George Orwell	<i>1984</i> (1948)

All the readings on the syllabus (except these books) have hyperlinks that will take you direct to the article in the Wesfiles folder for this course. I only use Moodle for grading, *not* for posting readings.

*Required or Core readings* are the first items listed for each class.

*Optional readings* are extra sources that I will be discussing in class. The more of them you are able to read, the more you will get out of the class, and the better your performance in papers and tests.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ESSAYS

Each student will be randomly assigned three countries in the second week of class.

You will research the political system in those countries and then write an essay applying one theory to one country i.e. a liberal analysis of Country A, a Marxist analysis of Country B, an Elite Theory analysis of Country C.

Each paper should be 5-7 pages long, consisting of:

- an introduction summarizing your main points.
- a page or so on the political history of the country, as interpreted through the theory being applied. Do not provide a detailed historical chronology.
- a couple of pages explaining how the current political system works, its structure and problems, as seen through the prism of the given theory. Who rules, and how? Is the political situation stable or unstable? What are the threats to stability? What does the theory propose should be done to improve things?
- a page discussing the advantages and disadvantages to using the given theory to analyze the country.

The assignment should be sent to me as an email attachment (Word) by 4.00 pm on the day it is due.

Remember what I am looking for is not only facts, but critical analysis of political institutions and processes.

For the history and overview of the political system you should begin with the history and annual reports on each country in Encyclopedia Britannica or Wikipedia, and the CIA and State Department sites listed on the next page.

Do not cut and paste material from internet sources into your essay.

You must locate and use **at least one book and two academic journal articles**, to give you a sense of academic approaches to the country.

Use **at least three newspaper articles** from sources such as *Wash Post* or *New York Times* to bring you up to date.

## WEB SOURCES

Here is a list of some of the most useful sites, in roughly descending order of importance.

<a href="#">Freedom House</a>	Annual country reports (click on the Country Reports button)
<a href="#">BBC country profiles</a>	Archive of recent articles on each country in the world. Note also the handy chronology of major political events.
<a href="#">Library of Congress Country Studies</a>	Detailed descriptions of institutions and recent events
<a href="#">CIA World Factbook</a>	Key facts and good socio-economic data on each country; top right search box.
<a href="#">Encyclopedia Britannica</a>	Access it through Olin library website. Type in a country's name and you will find articles on government and history. Click on the box 'Year in review' on the left and you will find articles summarizing the major political events each year.
<a href="#">The Economist</a>	File of articles on individual countries, search through index.
<a href="#">Open Democracy</a>	European site with lively articles about democratic prospects around the world.
<a href="#">Human Development Report</a>	Development reports and <a href="#">country data</a> , from the UN Development Project.
<a href="#">Gapminder</a>	Click on Gapminder World to load a striking graphics program using HDR data.

For the Marxism paper:

<a href="#">In Defense of Marxism</a>	Theoretical articles and news analysis.
<a href="#">World Socialist Website</a>	Search for stories on your country.

You should also search for relevant articles on your assigned countries in political science journals.  
Go to: [www.wesleyan.edu/library/](http://www.wesleyan.edu/library/) then click on Journal Locator under Electronic Resources

Useful academic journals:	<i>Current History</i>	<i>The Journal of Democracy</i>
<i>World Politics</i>	<i>Comparative Politics</i>	<i>Comparative Political Studies</i>

### Week 1 Jan 29

## WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

We are living in a democracy - but what exactly is a democracy?

*Core reading:*

Robert Dahl	<a href="#">On Democracy</a> , 35-43, 83-99
Amartya Sen	<a href="#">Development as Freedom</a> , Ch. 6, 146-159

### Week 2 Feb 3

## THE ROOTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

What was the classic model Athenian direct democracy? Things changed with the discovery of individual rights and representative government in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

*Core reading:*

Aristotle	<a href="#">Politics</a> (350 BC), Book 4
Benjamin Constant	<a href="#">The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns</a> (1816)
<i>The Economist</i>	' <a href="#">The Magna Carta at 800</a> ,' 20 Dec 2014

*Optional reading:*

James Madison	<a href="#">The Federalist Papers</a> (1787) no. 10
Alexis de Tocqueville	<a href="#">Democracy in America</a> (1836) chs. 1-5
Wikipedia	' <a href="#">Human Rights</a> '

**Week 2**  
**Feb 5**

## WHAT IS THE STATE?

Does Max Weber's classic definition of the state still apply? What do states do?  
Is the state obsolete in the era of globalization?

*Core reading:*

Michael Mann

'[The autonomous power of the state](#),' in John B. Hall (ed), *States in History* (1987) 109-36

Wikipedia

'[The State](#),' 'Nation state'

Eric Posner

'[Human rights law is a complete failure](#),' *Wash Post*, 1/14/2015

Francis Fukuyama

'[Why is democracy performing so poorly?](#),' *Journal of Democracy* 26: 1, Jan 2015

**Week 3**  
**Feb 10-12**

## BRITAIN

What are the differences between the US and British democratic traditions?  
How does a parliamentary system differ from a presidential system?  
What was Thatcherism, and why did it appear when it did? What did New Labour stand for?  
How is the Tory-Lib Dem coalition working out?

*Core reading:*

Kopstein & Lichbach

*Comparative Politics*, [Introduction](#), [ch. 1](#) and ch. 3 Rutland on [Britain](#)

Vernon Bogdanor

'[The historic legacy of Tony Blair](#),' *Current History*, March 2007

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[The London Riots of 2011](#)

**Week 4**  
**Feb 17**

## FRANCE & GERMANY

The reconstruction of democracy after 1945 in France and Germany.  
The workings of proportional representation and coalition governments; corporatism and the welfare state.

*Core reading:*

Kopstein & Lichbach

ch. 4 McFalls on [France](#) and ch. 5 Gould on [Germany](#)

*Optional reading:*

Jackson Janes

'[Merkel's Germany](#),' *Current History*, Mar 2007

**Week 4**  
**Feb 19**

## ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

How did democracy evolve as the right to vote expanded during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries?  
Why did it take so long for women to get the vote? What is Anthony Downs' 'median voter theorem'?

*Core reading:*

Donald Horowitz

'[Electoral systems](#): a primer for leaders,' *J. of Dem*, 14/4, Oct, 2003

Philippe Schmitter

'[What democracy is...and is not](#),' *Journal of Democracy*, 2/3, 1991

*Continued.....*

*Optional reading:*

Anthony Downs  
Robert Putnam

[An Economic Theory of Democracy](#) (1958) ch. 8  
['Bowling alone: America's declining social capital,'](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 6/1, Jan 1995

Caroline Pateman

['Three questions about womanhood suffrage,'](#) from Caroline Daley & Melanie Nolan (eds.) *Suffrage and Beyond*, 1995

### **First assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Friday Feb 20 by 4.00 pm:**

A liberal democratic analysis of country A. How democratic is country A? If not, why not? How could democracy in that country be improved or strengthened? Is that likely to happen?

To research this paper start with the [Freedom House](#) country reports (click on the Country Reports button). Also search for articles about your country in [Journal of Democracy](#) and through the Olin library website.

**Week 5**  
**Feb 24**

### **JAPAN**

Japan was the first non-European country to modernize itself. After 1945, it became a democracy, and enjoyed great economic success? How does Japanese democracy work?

*Core reading:*

Kopstein & Lichbach  
Steven Vogel

*Comparative Politics*, ch. 6 Schreurs on [Japan](#)  
['Japan's long road to competitive politics,'](#) *Current History*, Sept 2010

**Week5- 6**  
**Feb 26-Mar 3**

### **MARXISM AND IMPERIALISM**

According to Marxists liberal democracy is a fraudulent theory that masks domination by the capitalist class, and national politics as subordinate to an international system of global imperialism. What solutions does Marxism propose?

*Core reading:*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels [The Communist Manifesto](#) (1848)

Karl Marx ['The future results of the British rule in India'](#) (1853)

*Optional reading:*

Phil Gasper

['The meaning of the Manifesto today,'](#) *Socialist Worker*, 18 Nov 2005

Vladimir Lenin

[Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism](#) (1916), ch. 7

[the whole book is [online](#) here]

Andre Gunder Frank

[The Development of Underdevelopment](#) (1966)

[Jacobin](#)

new Marxist magazine

**Week 6**  
**Mar 5**

### **MID-TERM TEST**

A test of your grasp of the theories and concepts introduced in the course so far.

The in-class test lasts one hour and include five short identification questions and two short essays.

**Mar 9-22**

### **SPRING BREAK**

**Week 7**  
**Mar 24**

## THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union tried to build a state on Marxist principles. Their system was copied in two dozen other countries, usually with disastrous results. How did the Soviet system work? What is a 'totalitarian' regime? Why did Gorbachev launch perestroika - and why did it fail? Where is Russia headed today?

Kopstein & Lichbach      *Comparative Politics*, ch. 7 Hanson on [Russia](#)  
Leslie Holmes              '[Totalitarianism](#),' *International Encyc. of Social & Behavioral Sciences*  
George Orwell              1984

**Week 7**  
**Mar 26**

## POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

Why did democracy fail to take root in Russia in the 1990s?  
What is the basis of Putin's political power?

*Core reading:*  
Dmitri Trenin              '[The legacy of Vladimir Putin](#),' *Current History*, Oct 2007  
Peter Rutland              '[Russia's flawed democracy](#),' *Current History*, Oct 1998  
Freedom House              '[Russia Country Report 2014](#)'  
Lilia Shevtsova              '[Medvedev's Potemkin modernization](#),' *Current History*, October 2010

**Week 8**  
**Mar 31-Apr 2**

## CHINA

What were the differences between Chinese and Soviet socialism? Why is China, unlike Russia, still a Leninist state? How come China has done a better job of managing the transition to capitalism than Russia? Will China become a democracy in the near future?

*Core reading:*  
Kopstein & Lichbach      *Comparative Politics*, ch. 8 Wu on [China](#)  
Henry Rowen              '[When will China be free](#),' *Journal of Democracy*, 18/3, July 2007  
PBS                              [China From the Inside](#) (2007 documentary)  
*Optional reading:*  
Freedom House              [China Country Report 2014](#)  
Andrew Walder              '[Why China's regime has staying power](#),' *Current History*, Sept 2009  
Martin Dimitrov              '[The resilient authoritarians](#),' *Current History*, Jan 2008  
Bruce Dickson              '[The future of China's party state](#),' *Current History*, Sept 2007  
Orion Lewis                  [A China Model? Understanding the evolution of a 'socialist market economy'](#) (2009)  
& Jessica Teets

### **Second assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Friday April 3 by 4.00 pm:**

A Marxist analysis of country B. How would a Marxist assess the political and economic situation in country B? Is it stable or unstable? What classes or political forces exist in that country that could overthrow the colonial dependency or capitalist exploitation that prevails there? Even if a revolution is not likely, what "progressive forces" could improve the lot of the oppressed?

**Week 9**  
**Apr 7-9**

## **ELITE THEORY**

There is a third theory that combines some elements of liberalism and Marxism, while rejecting most of the ideas in these theories. Elite theory offers a framework for explaining the persistence of authoritarianism. Why have there been so many military coups? Why are authoritarian leaders so adept at clinging to power? Why do some launch modernizing reforms and not others? When do revolutions occur? Can they succeed?

*Core reading:*

Samuel P. Huntington [Political Order in Changing Societies](#) (1971) 1-58  
John Higley & G. Field [Elitism](#) (1980) 1-68  
[‘Coup d’etat’](#) govintelligence.com

*Optional reading:*

Fareed Zakaria [‘The rise of illiberal democracy’](#) *Foreign Affairs*, 76/6 Nov 97  
G. William Domhoff [Who Rules America](#) website on current US elites  
Alan Wolfe [‘The power elite now,’](#) *American Prospect*, 10/44, 1999

**Week 10**  
**Apr 14**

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

The collapse of the apartheid regime was a major triumph for democracy. It was revolutionary change – but there was no revolution. Why did the Afrikaners agree to give up power? Can South Africa be a model for other African states?

*Core reading:*

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 12 Handley on [South Africa](#)  
Bill Keller [‘South Africa since Mandela,’](#) *New York Times* 12/26/2012  
Antoinette Handley [‘The new South Africa,’](#) *Current History*, May 2004  
[Long Night’s Journey into Day](#) (2000 documentary)

*Optional reading:*

Antoinette Handley [‘The new South Africa,’](#) *Current History*, May 2004  
Freedom House [South Africa Country Report 2012](#)  
R.W. Johnson [‘Zuma’s first year,’](#) *Current History*, May 2010  
Robert Mattes [‘South Africa: democracy without the people?’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 12/1, Jan 2002

**Week 10**  
**Apr 16**

## **INDIA**

India made the transition from colonial rule to become the world’s largest democracy. How can a country so poor, and so divided by religious and ethnic strife, sustain itself as a democracy?

*Core reading:*

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 10 Sil on [India](#)

*Optional reading:*

Eswaran Sridharan [‘Behind Modi’s victory,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 25: 4 Oct 2014, 20-33  
Indrani Bagchi [‘A tale of two Singhs,’](#) *Current History*, April 2011  
Freedom House [‘India 2014’](#)  
Ashutosh Varshney [‘India: Why democracy survives’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 9/3, Jul 1998  
Sumit Ganguly [‘Six decades of independence,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 18/3, Jul 2007

**Week 11**  
**Apr 21**

**MEXICO AND LATIN AMERICA**

Mexico had a revolution that led to one-party rule, but not Soviet-style socialism. In 2000 the PRI allowed a free election which was won by the opposition candidate, Vicente Fox. Mexico was not alone. In the 1990s all the Latin American countries, except Cuba, made the transition to democracy.

Kopstein & Lichbach	<i>Comparative Politics</i> , ch. 9 Gill on <a href="#">Mexico</a>
Freedom House	<a href="#">Mexico 2012</a>
Alejandro Toledo	' <a href="#">Democracy with development</a> ,' <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 41/4 Oct 2010
<i>Optional reading</i>	
Andreas Schedler	' <a href="#">The criminal subversion of Mexican democracy</a> ,' <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 25: 1 Jan 2015
Denise Dresser	' <a href="#">Fox's Mexico</a> ,' <i>Current History</i> , Feb 2005
Jorge Castaneda	' <a href="#">The year of the ballot</a> ,' <i>Current History</i> , Feb 2007

**Week 11**  
**Apr 23**

**ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY (pre 2011)**

Before 2011, the academic literature was trying to explain the absence of democracy in the Arab world. What kinds of political system are found in Moslem countries? Are Islam and democracy compatible?

<i>Core reading:</i>	
Eva Bellin	' <a href="#">The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East</a> ,' <i>Comparative Politics</i> 36/2, 2004, 139-157
Stephen Fish	' <a href="#">Democracy</a> ,' ch. 7 in <i>Are Muslims Distinctive?</i> (2011)
<i>Optional reading:</i>	
Yayha Sadowski	' <a href="#">Political Islam: asking the wrong questions</a> ,' <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , 9, 2006: 215-40.
Larry Diamond	' <a href="#">Why no Arab democracies?</a> ' <i>J. of Democracy</i> 21/1, Jan 2010, 93-112
Fares Braizat	' <a href="#">What Arabs think</a> ,' <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 21/4, Oct. 2010, 131-138
Kavita Ramdas	' <a href="#">Feminists and fundamentalists</a> ,' <i>Current History</i> , March 2006
Vali Nasr	' <a href="#">The rise of "Muslim Democracy"</a> ,' <i>Jr. of Democracy</i> , 16/2, Apr 2005
Adrian Karatnycky	' <a href="#">Moslem countries and the democracy gap</a> ,' <i>Jr. of Dem</i> , 13/1, Jan 2002
Michael L. Ross	' <a href="#">Does oil hinder democracy?</a> ' <i>World Politics</i> , 53/3, 2001, 325-361

**Week 12**  
**Apr 28-30**

**THE ARAB SPRING**

The uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya caught everyone by surprise. Why did they break out? How important were social media in these revolutions? What are the prospects for stable democracies emerging in the Arab world?

<i>Core reading:</i>	
James Galvin	<i>The Arab Uprisings</i> (2012)
[Anonymous]	<a href="#">Egypt: The Demonstrator's Handbook</a> (2011)
Larry Diamond	' <a href="#">Liberation technology</a> ,' <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 21/ 3, July 2010, 69-83
Tina Rosenberg	' <a href="#">Revolution U</a> ,' <i>Foreign Policy</i> , 16 Feb 2011
CBS News	<a href="#">How a slap started Tunisia's revolution</a> 60 Minutes, 20 Feb 2011
Tarek Masoud	' <a href="#">Has the door slammed on Arab democracy?</a> ' <i>J. of Dem.</i> 21: 5 Jan 2015
<i>Optional reading:</i>	

Al Jazeera [Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark](#), TV documentary, 4 Aug 2011  
 Al Jazeera [The Arab Awakening](#) (seven films, May 2011)  
 Timur Kuran [‘Now out of never: surprise in the East European revolution of 1989,’](#)  
*World Politics*, 44, Oct 1991, 7-48  
 Jim de Fronzo [Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements](#) (1991), ch. 1.  
 Malcolm Gladwell [‘Why the revolution will not be tweeted,’](#) *New Yorker*, Oct 4, 2010  
 Jared Keller [‘Evaluating Iran’s “Twitter revolution”,’](#) *Atlantic*, 21 June 2010  
 Robert Farris & B. Etling [‘Madison and the smart mob,’](#) *Fletcher Forum*, 32/2, 2008

**Week 13**  
**May 5**

## CONCLUSION

What are the prospects for democracy world-wide? Can democracy survive and prosper?  
 Can it meet the challenges of ethnic conflict, poverty, inequality, and environmental decay?

*Core reading:*

*The Economist* [‘What’s gone wrong with democracy?’](#) 28 Feb 2014  
 Arch Puddington [‘Freedom in the world 2014’](#) Freedom House

*Optional reading:*

Seymour M. Lipset [‘The social prerequisites of democracy revisited,’](#) *American Sociological Review*, 59, Feb 1994  
 Larry Diamond [‘Why democracies survive,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 22/1, Jan. 2011  
 Alejandro Toledo [‘Democracy with development,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 21/4, Oct 2010

**Third assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Tuesday May 5 by 4.00 pm:**

An Elite theory analysis of country C. How would an Elite Theorist assess the political and economic situation in country C? Who makes up the ruling elite, and what is the basis for their power? Is the situation stable or unstable? What classes or political forces exist that could threaten or promote stability?

**Tuesday, May 12, 9.00 am**

**FINAL EXAM**

A test of your grasp of the theories and concepts introduced in the course, and the main features of the cases studies in class. The final will cover the entire syllabus but with a focus on the second half. Same format as the mid-term: one hour to answer 5 short identification questions and 2 short essay questions.