Democracy and Dictatorship: Politics in the Contemporary World
Government 157, Fall 2013
TR 9:00-10:20, PAC 002

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OVERVIEW
This course is an introduction to “comparative politics”: the study of political institutions, identities, and events as they exist (and change) within the different countries in the world. Political scientists differentiate comparative politics from international relations, which deals with political relationships between countries, and from two other subfields: American politics, which focuses on the US only, and political philosophy, which asks normative rather than empirical questions. Within the limits of comparative politics, this course has been designed with an eye to breadth rather than depth. We will not study any political system(s) in detail, and we will not restrict our attention to any one object of interest to comparativists. Instead, we will approach political institutions (the state), modes of governance (regimes), political economy (markets), and political identities (nations) from a maximally broad-ranging point of view.

This course assumes no prior familiarity with the politics or history of any country in the world, or with any other aspect of political science. What I do assume is a willingness to read and consider a wide range of material, from authors of widely varying opinions, about more different places than any of us could possibly know well.

COURSE MATERIALS
The readings for this course have been compiled into a reader available for purchase from the Wesleyan print shop. You can order a copy of the reader through your portfolio: look in the bin “Academic Resources” for a link that says “Supplemental Course Materials.” After you place your order, a reader will be printed for you and delivered to your WesBox. (If you run into any problems with this process, please contact me or printing@wesleyan.edu.) Acquisition of a course reader is mandatory, and you should plan to bring your reader to every class session.

The readings for this course are extremely diverse. These pieces were written for different audiences at different times, and some are easier to read than others. There is no expectation that you will immediately understand everything you read for this course. What I do expect from all students is a good-faith effort to complete the reading for each session before class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
This course is an introductory survey focused on reading and discussion. Your performance will be evaluated on the basis of your attendance and participation in class, and on the strength of
three take-home exams you will write over the course of the semester. The purpose of these exams – in effect, essays written to prompts I will supply – is to give you the opportunity to develop your own ideas about the material in written form, and to compel you (in some cases) to take and defend one side of a difficult question. Although you will write them outside of class, all of your exams should be your own work, and yours alone. You will not need to consult any materials other than your notes and your course reader.

The second major expectation of this course is that you should be a regular, engaged participant in the class itself. You are expected to come to class every day – more than two absences will rapidly cost you all your participation points – and to have completed the assigned reading before class begins. Although we are a fairly large group for Wesleyan, this will be a discussion-oriented course, and all students are expected to play some part in the group discussion. In addition, I will regularly give small in-class or preparation-for-class assignments dealing with the course reading; all these things will become part of your participation grade.

These aspects of the course will be aggregated into your final grade as follows:

Attendance and participation: 20%
First take-home exam: 25%
Second take-home exam: 25%
Take-home final exam: 30%

Grand total: 100%

Late work. Do not turn work in late. Unless by explicit and mutual agreement in advance of the deadline – which you should not expect to secure – I will extend deadlines on the take-home exams only for students who were verifiably incapacitated (seriously ill, injured, incarcerated) at the time their work was due.

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Violations of the Wesleyan honor code will not be tolerated in this course. Every major assignment will be accompanied by explicit instructions on how your work is to be done or not done – with respect to citation/attribution, collaboration, and any other issues I may deem relevant – and I expect those instructions to be followed precisely. If you have any questions, at any time, about what “academic dishonesty” or “honor code violation” means in the context of this course, please come and discuss those with me before you make any irreversible choices. Asking questions will never get you in trouble.

Tip: This course is focused on reading and discussion, not independent research. There is no expectation that you should consult any resources or materials other than those contained between the covers of your course reader. If you refrain from doing so, you may spare yourself any unanticipated problems.

OTHER TOPICS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Disability resources. Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of
2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible. If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860-685-2332 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

**Religious observances.** If you will need to miss class because of a religious observance, please notify me as early as possible, and we will make arrangements to keep you up to date in the course. Do not wait until after the holiday has occurred.

**Writing assistance.** Wesleyan offers a variety of peer and staff resources to help students develop their writing skills. If you encounter difficulty with the written assignments in this course and would like to work with Wesleyan’s writing tutors to revise and improve your work, we can create a structure for you to do so.

### COURSE OUTLINE, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

#### I. COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS

**September 3:** Course introduction – no reading

**September 5:** What? Concepts


**September 10:** Why? Causes

Gerring, John. *Social Science Methodology.* Read chapters 6-7 (“Description and Prediction” and “Causation”), pp 118-147.

Aristotle. ~330 BC. *Politics* (types of constitutions). Read the excerpt provided.


**September 12:** How? Mechanisms


Goodwin, Jeff. 2011. Why We Were Surprised (Again) By the Arab Spring. Swiss Political Science Review 17(4): 452-456.

II. STATES

September 17: The rise of the modern state

Weber, Max. 1922. Read “Political and Hierocratic Organizations,” in chapter 1, volume 1 of Economy and Society.


September 19: The state in Africa


September 24: State failure


September 26: Evading the state


First take-home exam distributed in class.
III. REGIMES

October 1: Democracy (1)


October 3: Democracy (2)


Also, turn forward and read Appendix 1 (pp 178-9) of Przeworski and Limongi’s article “Modernization: Theories and Facts.”

First take-home exam due Friday, October 4.

October 8: Varieties of non-democracy


October 10: Regime change (1)


October 15: Regime change (2)


October 17: Stable autocracy?


October 22: Fall break – no class

IV. MARKETS

October 24: The rise of modern capitalism


Second take-home exam distributed in class.

October 29: Modernization and democracy


October 31: Modernization’s critics


Second take-home exam due Friday, November 1.

November 5: Solving the puzzle?


November 7: Promoting development


November 12: States, regimes, and markets: A final view


V. NATIONS

November 14: The rise of the modern nation?


**November 19:** Making the nation: France


**November 21:** Making the nation: Russia


**November 26:** Making the nation: South Africa


**November 28:** Thanksgiving – no class

**December 3:** Civic society (1)


**December 5:** Civic society (2)


**Take-home final exam distributed in class December 5.** Due date TBD.