Democracy and Dictatorship: Politics in the Contemporary World

GOVT 157 – Fall 2012
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
(M & W 8:30-9:50 AM)
PAC 125

Instructor: Kent Freeze
Phone: 860-685-3323
Email: kfreeze@wesleyan.edu
Office: PAC 207
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 10:00am-12 noon and by appt.

Course Description

Is Russia a democracy? How do politics differ in Western Europe compared to the United States? Why did the Arab Spring occur in 2011 and not 1990? This course will explore these and other questions examining politics within different countries. The comparison of political institutions and behavior within different countries is referred to as Comparative Politics, a subfield of political science distinct from International Relations, which examines politics between countries.

The first portion of the course will explore the distinguishing features of democracies and dictatorships, as well as their origins and some of the implications of the two regime types. In the second section, we will examine the variety of dictatorships around the world. Finally, in the third section, we will explore the variety of different democratic political institutions and political behavior in democracies. By the end of this course, you should better understand the different political institutions and important political issues in countries around the world.

Textbook and Readings

The majority of readings come from the textbook Principles of Comparative Politics, 2e by Clark, Golder and Golder. In the syllabus, I refer to all readings from the textbook by the acronym CGG. Supplementary readings are made available on Moodle. The typical reading load will be approximately 100 to 120 pages a week.
Grading

Class Preparation, Attendance and Participation - 15%

Attendance is required. You will be allowed to miss up to three classes without penalty. Participation grades will be determined by the quality not quantity of comments/questions in class discussion.

At the start of each class, you are required to submit two questions/criticisms relating to the readings assigned for that day. Please submit these questions on a 3 by 5 file card (or similar size). They will be graded on a three point scale: 2 points=acceptable; 1 point=unacceptable/I’m not sure you read it; 0 points=seriously deficient/youdidn’t turn anything in. You will be given 3 grace days which can be used to cover any absences (sickness, funerals, weddings, etc.). Questions are due within five minutes of the start of class (i.e. 8:35am), and late questions are not accepted. The reading questions will count for two-thirds of this grade.

Two Country Case Studies - 20% Each

Over the course of the semester, you will have the opportunity to examine two countries (one dictatorship/authoritarian and one democracy) that we will not be covering as a class (see the below list). For each country, you will prepare a short (four to five pages, double spaced) report. In addition, you will collaborate with one other student (who selected the same country as you) to prepare a very short presentation (no longer than 10 minutes) on the politics of the country. The presentation will be shown to the class on the indicated date in the syllabus. Although the presentation is collaborative, the paper is to be your own work.

Potential Dictatorships for case study: Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Iran, North Korea, Singapore, Venezuela, Russia, Chile under Pinochet.

Potential Democracies for case study: Germany, Sweden, Canada, South Africa, India, Chile, Mexico, South Korea, Botswana.

The dictatorship case study paper will be due October 24, and the democracy case study paper will be due November 19. For more information on this assignment, consult the sheet on Moodle.

Midterm Exam 20%

The midterm exam will be held in class on October 10 and will contain material covered up to (and including) Oct. 3.
Final Exam 25%

The final exam will be held on Friday, Dec. 14 from 9–12am in the classroom. The final will be comprehensive.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

Here are several important details regarding my policy on course grades

1. I will not receive grade complaints if more than two weeks have passed after the assignment has been returned. Before I review your grade you must first:
   - Wait 24 hours.
   - Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
   - Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not to vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”

   The second grade, whether higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.

2. Late assignments are not tolerated. Your grade will be lowered 5 points for each day it is late (the exception is for the reading questions, which will not be accepted if late). That is if the assignment is due on Wednesday and you complete it on Thursday, the highest grade you can make is 95. If you complete it on Friday, the highest grade possible will be a 90. And so forth.

3. The ONLY acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are family emergencies or illnesses. However, in these cases, I will arrange to give you extra time ONLY if you communicate with me BEFORE the assignment is due and you provide DOCUMENTATION of the circumstance.

Electronics in Class Policy

You are welcome to bring digital equipment (laptop, ebook reader, etc.) to class. However, I expect you to be responsible in your use of electronic equipment: please avoid visiting social networking sites, or otherwise browsing the internet on sites unrelated to the course. I would also recommend you read through the discussion (including comments), Computers in the Classroom, to think about the possible pros and cons of using computers in a classroom setting. Individuals who abuse this privilege will be asked to turn off their computer. Please turn off all cell phones during class.
Academic Honesty
You are expected to follow the Wesleyan Honor Code which can be found at [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/honorboard/honorcode.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/honorboard/honorcode.html). All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources!

Disability-Related Accomodations
It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible (during the 2nd week of the semester), so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html).
Course Schedule

Readings must be completed prior to class. I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule. I will alert you to any changes made in class, via email, and I will post the updated syllabus on Moodle.

Part I: Democracy and Dictatorship: What is it?

Week 1: The Modern State

September 3: The Science of Comparative Politics
  • Introductory Class: No required readings.

September 5: The State
  • CGG, Chapter 4: The Origins of the Modern State: pgs. 87–124.

Week 2: Definitions of Democracy and Dictatorship

September 10: Definition and History of Democracy
  • Case Study preferences must be sent in by 5pm today.

September 12: Conceptualization and Measurement

Week 3: Origins of Democracy

September 17: Economic Accounts of Democracy and Dictatorship

September 19: Culture and Democracy
  • CGG, Chapter 7: Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship, pgs. 213–258.
Week 4: Transitions to Democracy

September 24: Bottom-Up and Top-Down Models

- CGG, Chapter 8: Democratic Transitions, pgs. 265–306.

September 26: Case Study – Democratization and the Arab Spring

- Ajami, Fouad. (2012). The Arab Spring at One. *Foreign Affairs*

Week 5: Dictatorship, Democracy and the Economy

October 1: The Success and Spread of Democracy


October 3: Democracy, Inequality and Economic Growth

- CGG, Chapter 9, Democracy or Dictatorship: Does it Make a Difference?: pgs. 325–346.

Section II: Varieties of Dictatorship

Week 6: Varieties of Dictatorship

October 8: Varieties of Dictatorship


October 10

In-class Midterm Exam

Week 7: Dictatorship Case Studies

October 15: NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)

October 17: Electoral Authoritarianism: A Case Study of Mexico under the PRI, 1929–2000


• 10 minute case study presentations of Cuba, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

**Week 8: Dictatorship Case Studies, Continued**

**October 22: Military Dictatorships: Myanmar (Burma)**


• 10 minute case study presentations of North Korea, Singapore, Venezuela.

**October 24: Institutionalized Dominant Party: The PRC**

• DICTATORSHIP CASE STUDY PAPER DUE TODAY!

• Susan Lawrence and Michael Martin. Understanding China’s political system. *CRS Report for Congress*, 2012


• 10 minute case study presentations of Russia and Chile under Pinochet.

**Section III: Varieties of Democracies**

**Week 9: Groups and Democratic Institutions**

**October 29: Aggregating Preferences**


**October 31: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems**


**Week 10: Party and Electoral Systems**

**November 5: Elections and Electoral Systems**


**November 7: Party Systems**

Week 11: Veto Players

November 12: Institutional Veto Players

November 14: Political Institutions in Japan
- 10 minute case study presentations of Germany, South Africa, Chile.

Week 12: Democratic Case Studies

November 19: Political Institutions in the United Kingdom
- DEMOCRACY CASE STUDY PAPER DUE TODAY!
- 10 minute case study presentations of Sweden, India, Botswana.

November 21: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

Week 13: Democratic Case Studies and Outcomes

November 26: Political Institutions in Brazil
- 10 minute case study presentations of Canada, Mexico, South Korea.

November 28: Varieties of Democracy and Fiscal Policy
- CGG, Chapter 16: Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pgs. 741–787.

Week 14: Varieties of Democracy and Outcomes

December 3: Ethnic Conflict and Democratic Survival
- CGG, Chapter 16: Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pgs. 788–825.
December 5: Review for the Final
No required readings. Please begin your review and come prepared with questions.

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 14, 2012 from 9–12am