Instructor: Jennifer Smith (jsmith11@wesleyan.edu)
PAC (Public Affairs Center) 202
Office hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00, Wednesdays 9:30-11:00, and by appointment
Office phone: 685-3323 [email is quicker than voicemail]

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 one political system 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 (nationalism and culture) 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 under “Academic Resources” for a link to “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 requirement for this course is that you be a regular, engaged participant in the class itself. This participation component entails three expectations: [1] Attend class every day, arriving promptly and with the assigned readings in hand. More than two unexplained absences will result in an accelerating loss of participation points. [2] Engage in class discussion. I do not expect (or intend) that every student should be equally loquacious, but I do expect all students to play some part in group discussion over the course of the semester. I will often bring short in-class assignments to structure and facilitate discussion; these worksheets will also form part of your participation grade. [3] Together with a fellow student or two, organize and lead a discussion of a current event in comparative politics of particular interest to you. These current-events presentations/discussions will begin February 18 and occupy the first 20 minutes of each Tuesday’s class through the end of the semester. Additional details on this assignment will be distributed soon.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation:</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group current-events presentation:</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First take-home exam:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second take-home exam:</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home final exam:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Late work.** Do not turn work in late. Except by explicit and mutual agreement in advance of the deadline – which you should not assume will be forthcoming – I will extend deadlines on the take-home exams only for students who were verifiably incapacitated (seriously ill, injured, called away from Middletown) 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. With the single exception of the current-events assignment, there is no expectation that you should consult any resources or materials other than those contained between the covers of your course reader. Refraining from doing so is one way to avoid 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. 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 would like to work with a Wesleyan writing tutor on revising drafts of your take-home exams for this course, you are welcome to do so. Please indicate that fact clearly on your submitted essay.

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

**I. COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

**January 23:** Course introduction – no reading

**January 28:** What? Concepts


**January 30:** 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.

February 4: How? Mechanisms


II. STATES

February 6: The rise of the modern state


February 11: War-making and state-making in comparative perspective


February 13: State failure


February 18: Evading the state


First take-home exam distributed in class
Current-events presentations begin today, February 18
III. REGIMES

February 20:  Democracy (1)


February 25:  Democracy (2)


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

February 27:  Varieties of non-democracy


First take-home exam due Friday, February 28

March 4:  Regime change (1)

March 6: Regime change (2)


Weeks of March 10/17: SPRING BREAK

March 25: Stable autocracy?


Second take-home exam distributed in class

IV. MARKETS

March 27: The rise of modern capitalism


April 1: Modernization and democracy


April 3: Modernization’s critics


Second take-home exam due Friday, April 4

April 8: Solving the puzzle?


April 10: Promoting development


April 15: States, regimes, and markets: A final view


V. NATIONS

April 17: The rise of the modern nation?


April 22: Making the nation: France


April 24: Making the nation: South Africa


April 29: Civic society (1)


May 1: Civic society (2)


May 6: Wrapping up


Take-home final exam distributed in class May 6. Due date TBD.