OVERVIEW
How does democratic government work? Perhaps more to the point, how does it not work? What are the tradeoffs involved in organizing democracy in one way rather than another, and how do those tradeoffs affect politics (and, ultimately, citizens) in countries that have chosen to organize democracy in different ways? This course is a seminar centered on these questions. It is a course in comparative politics: we will study democratic political institutions in a variety of countries, and we will maintain a consistent interest in what actually happens – and fails to happen – in these countries’ politics. At the same time, we will also reach well into the territory of two other subfields of political science: American politics (since we will pay disproportionate attention to the US case) and political theory (since we will routinely ask normative questions about the advantages and disadvantages of different models of democracy).

This course is an advanced seminar intended for students with prior experience in at least one of the American and comparative politics fields. More specifically, students are encouraged to enroll in the course only if they are already familiar with both the organization of politics and the scholarly investigation of politics in at least one of the advanced democracies listed on page 3, and would like to extend their understanding of democratic politics in a comparative direction. The course is not designed as a survey introduction to political institutions in Europe, in the United States, or in any other country, and I intend to lecture ex cathedra only to the extent necessary to ensure a common basis for a productive group discussion. That said, however, we will begin our analysis of each dimension of democracy from the proverbial ground up.

COURSE MATERIALS
The assigned readings for this course can be found in three books and a course reader. I have ordered the following titles at Broad Street Books; feel free to find copies there or via any other source. You will need the Lijphart book immediately; the others come later in the semester.


The remaining readings – amounting to a majority of the total – will be compiled into a reader available for purchase through the Wesleyan print shop. I will notify you when the reader is ready for printing; you will then be able to order a copy through your portfolio (the link is “supplemental course materials,” under “academic resources”). Acquisition of a reader is mandatory, and you should plan to bring yours with you to every class session.

As a supplementary resource for students, I am also making available high-quality survey texts on European and American politics, respectively. These books will be stored in the “Govt 384” paper-return box outside the Government department office, and they are intended for use inside the building. (There are comfy chairs in the lobby.) The book on European politics is Gallagher, Laver & Mair, *Representative Government in Western Europe* (5th edition, 2011), and the US politics text will be a loaner supplied by Prof. Dancey, TBA. **Do not steal these books.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This is a seminar. In a sense, the primary “learning outcome” to be derived from the course is the course itself: a structured, weekly, not-quite-three-hour conversation about the nature and functioning of democratic political institutions as they exist (and vary) in countries around the world. The baseline expectation from all students is that they should arrive at each week’s meeting prepared to participate in this conversation in an informed, productive, open-minded way. My goals as instructor are to shore up the collective information base of our conversation where desirable, to facilitate breadth and balance where necessary (as to participants as well as ideas), and to stay out of the way where possible.

The formal expectations for the course are designed to serve this underlying goal. You will be evaluated on the basis of your attendance and seminar participation as well as on the strength of several writing assignments – most of which you will complete over the course of the semester, rather than as a larger research assignment at the end. Briefly, these expectations are as follows:

**Attendance and participation:** All students are expected to be active, respectful, and engaged participants in seminar discussion. While I know that not every student is equally chatty (and that chattiness is not always the first step to wisdom), I will make an effort to spread discussion around, and I rely on all students to take advantage of those opportunities. Because this course meets only once a week, regular attendance is especially important. If you are forced to miss class for reasons beyond your control, please try to notify me in advance of your absence.

**Weekly analysis papers:** Over the course of the semester, you will submit at least ten short papers analyzing the assigned readings for a session of this course. Analysis papers should run not less than 700 and not more than 900 words and are due every Wednesday at 11:00 AM. (I will create a dropbox on Moodle for submitting your essays.) A successful analysis paper must, without fail, contain an argument. More broadly, a good essay of this type is (a) precise, correct, and respectful of the original authors in its use of the source material; (b) directed and decisive – but not crude or overreaching – in developing the argument or critique advanced by its author; and (c) as broad-ranging as possible given the constraints imposed by (a), (b), and the word limit. Supply your essays with parenthetical citations in author-page number form, referring either to page numbers in the reader or in the source text, e.g.: (U.S. Constitution 3) (Alesina and Glaeser 147). There is no need to incorporate a bibliography.
I will endeavor to ensure that graded essays are available for collection on Mondays, so that you will have your previous week’s work in hand as you finalize each essay. Note that the requirement is to write ten analysis papers over twelve weeks on a schedule of your choosing. You may, if you like, submit additional weekly papers and drop your lowest grade(s).

Final essay: The final writing assignment for this course will be a critical essay addressing some feature of democracy in a single democratic country. You will choose your country – but not your specific topic – early in the semester, and you will explore its institutions over several class sessions before settling on the specific aspect of its democracy you wish to analyze. For purposes of this assignment, every student will be required to select a different country, and no student will be permitted to select the country with whose political system and problems (s)he is most familiar. The set of available countries has been intentionally restricted to include only countries of the type that are the focus of this syllabus: longstanding, advanced-industrial democracies of at least medium size. Countries that transitioned to democracy in the 1980s and later are excluded. The options are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Attendance and participation: 25%
- Analysis papers (10 @ 5% each): 50%
- Mid-semester work on final project: 5%
- Final essay: 20%
- Grand total: 100%

Late work. Do not turn work in late. If you cannot submit an analysis paper on time, skip that week and proceed to the next. (You have two free weeks.)

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Violations of the Wesleyan honor code will not be tolerated in this course. It is never acceptable to present others’ words and ideas as your own, and it is also doubly counterproductive: it defeats the intellectual purpose of a course of this type, and it denies other scholars credit there would be no penalty for awarding. If you have any questions, at any time, about what “academic dishonesty” or “honor code violation” means in the context of this course, please discuss those with me before you make any irreversible choices.

Tip: The focus of this seminar is reading and discussion, not independent research. With the exception of the final essay assignment, you will not be asked to consult any resources or materials beyond those listed on this syllabus. Refraining from doing so can help you 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.

COURSE OUTLINE AND INITIAL READING ASSIGNMENTS

JANUARY 29: INTRODUCTORY


FEBRUARY 5: WESTMINSTER AND CONSENSUS DEMOCRACY

The distinction between “Westminster” or “majoritarian” and “consensus” forms of democracy is Arend Lijphart’s most enduring contribution to political science. Clarify this distinction. Is it useful? Is it coherent? Should we suppose that all democracies – or certain types of democracies – will tend to one model or the other, or that they would be better off if they did so? Using the material supplied by these various authors, try stating the case for and against each model in the strongest possible terms. Which statement do you find most convincing, and why?


**FEBRUARY 12: PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY**


Constitution of the United States of America. Read articles I-II.


Alexander Hamilton. 1788. *The Federalist* #70, 71, 73.


**FEBRUARY 19: MADISONIAN DEMOCRACY, OR “SEPARATED INSTITUTIONS SHARING POWER”**

Constitution of the United States of America. Read or review the rest of it.


Pro and contra on Madisonian democracy: Recent contributions from Dylan Matthews, Ian Millhiser, and Jonathan Bernstein.


FEBRUARY 26: OPERATING DEMOCRACY (1): ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND PARTY SYSTEMS


Rod Donald. 2003. Proportional Representation in New Zealand: How the People Let Themselves In. (Speech delivered by an MP for the New Zealand Greens.)


Various contributors: The 2011 AV Referendum in the United Kingdom.

MARCH 5: OPERATING DEMOCRACY (2): POLITICAL PARTIES – PRO AND CONTRA

Review *Federalist* #10.


Hans Noel. 2011. How to Understand the “Invisible Primary.” Interview with Greg Marx (*Columbia Journalism Review*).

Political Parties Act of the Federal Republic of Germany. Read the excerpts provided.


**MARCH 12 & 19: SPRING BREAK**

**MARCH 26: OPERATING DEMOCRACY (3): GOVERNING BY COALITION**


Various contributors: The formation of Germany’s new grand coalition, 2013.

**APRIL 2: DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC POLICY (1): GETTING STUFF DONE**


**APRIL 9: DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC POLICY (2): REDISTRIBUTION**


**APRIL 16: DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS (1): GUARDIANSHIP**


**APRIL 23: DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS (2): COURTS & MINORITY PROTECTION**


Constitution of October 4, 1958 (France). Read the first few paragraphs.

Declaration of the Rights of Man. 1789.


Alexander Hamilton. 1788. The Federalist, #78.


APRIL 30: DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS (3): THE PEOPLE’S VOICE


Various contributors: Recent referendums in Switzerland.


**MAY 5: THE END OF DEMOCRACY?**
