GOVT 157 fall 2017

DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP: POLITICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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ASSESSMENT: 1) Mid-term test in class on Oct 19. [15 points]
2) Three 5-7 page assignments due on Sep 29, Nov 3 and Dec 1. [20 points each]
3) Final examination at 9.00 on Wed Dec 13 or 2.00 on Thu 14. [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.
Use of laptops or phones in class is NOT allowed.

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 the best form of government for dealing with these challenges. Despite the homogenizing process of globalization, only by studying individual countries can we understand the variety of political and economic systems and the complexity of the modern world.

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 193 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:

John Dryzek & Patrick Dunleavy \textit{Theories of the Democratic State} (Palgrave 2009)
James Gelvin \textit{The Arab Uprisings} (Oxford University Press, 2015) paper 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition

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

Core readings are required, 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 \textit{Wash Post} or \textit{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.

- **Freedom House**  
  Annual country reports (click on the Country Reports button)

- **BBC country profiles**  
  Archive of recent articles on each country in the world. Note also the handy chronology of major political events.

- **Library of Congress Country Studies**  
  Detailed descriptions of institutions and recent events

- **CIA World Factbook**  
  Key facts and good socio-economic data on each country; top right search box.

- **Encyclopedia Britannica**  
  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.

- **The Economist**  
  File of articles on individual countries, search through index or on Olin site.

- **Open Democracy**  
  European site with lively articles about democratic prospects around the world.

- **Human Development Report**  
  Development reports and country data, from the UN Development Project.

- **Gapminder**  
  Click on Gapminder World to load a striking graphics program using HDR data.

For the Marxism paper:

- **In Defense of Marxism**  
  Theoretical articles and news analysis.

- **World Socialist Website**  
  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/ then click on Journal Locator under Electronic Resources

Useful academic journals:  

- *The Journal of Democracy*  
- *World Politics*  
- *Comparative Politics*  
- *Comparative Political Studies*

**Week 1**  

**INTRODUCTION**

What is the best form of government? What do we mean by “best”, and how do we measure it?

**Week 1**

**WHAT IS THE STATE?**

How does Max Weber define the state? What do states do?  
Is the state obsolete in the era of globalization?

*Core reading:*  
Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (1919)  
‘State’

*Optional reading:*  
**Week 2**  
**Sept 12**  
**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 18th century.

*Core reading:*
- Aristotle  
  *Politics* (350 BC), Book 4
- Benjamin Constant  
  *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns* (1816)
- The Economist  
  ‘The Magna Carta at 800’ 20 Dec 2014

*Optional reading:*
- Fred Miller  
  ‘Aristotle’s political theory’  
  Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2011)
- Amartya Sen  
  ‘Democracy as a universal value’  

*Outside lecture*  
**Sep 13 12.15pm**  
‘**Merkel and the German election**’  
Sarah Wiliarty (Wesleyan)  
FISK 208

**Week 2-3**  
**Sept 14-19**  
**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?  
Why did people vote for Brexit?

*Core reading:*
- Kopstein & Lichbach  
  *Comparative Politics, Introduction, ch. 1* and ch. 3  
  Rutland on *Britain*
- John Dryzek & Patrick Dunleavy  
  *Theories of the Democratic State* (2009) ch 2
- Vernon Bogdanor  
  ‘The historic legacy of Tony Blair’  
  *Current History*, March 2007
- Rowena Mason  
  ‘How did the UK end up voting to leave the EU?’  
  *Guardian* 6/24/2016
- Matthew Goodwin  
  ‘What Brexit means for Britain’  
  *Current History*  
  March 2017
- Ed Fieldhouse & Chris Prosser  
  ‘General election 2017’  
  *BBC* 8/1/2017

**Week 3**  
**Sept 21**  
**DISCUSSION SECTION – the liberal model**

**Week 4**  
**Sept 26**  
**FRANCE & GERMANY**

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

*Core reading:*
- Kopstein & Lichbach  
  ch. 4 McFalls on *France* and ch. 5 Gould on *Germany*
- Jackson Janes  
  ‘Merkel’s Germany’  
  *Current History*, Mar 2007
- Joyce Mershan  
  ‘Merkel’s leadership in the refugee crisis’  
  *Current History*  
  March 2017
- Sudhir Hazareesingh  
  ‘France’s republican monarchy’  
  *Financial Times* 4/21/2017
- Veronica Hoyo & William Chandler  
  ‘4 lessons from France’s presidential election’  
  5/9/2017
- Jennifer Fredette  
  ‘The French state of emergency’  
  *Current History*  
  March 2017

*Outside lecture*  
**Sep 27, 7.30 pm**  
‘**Commemorating and protesting white supremacy**’  
Crystal Feimster (Yale University), Memorial Chapel
Week 4
Sep 28

ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

What choices are made in designing electoral systems? How effective are elections at translating voter preferences into policy? What is Anthony Downs’ ‘median voter theorem’? Why did it take so long for women to get the vote?

Core reading:
John Dryzek & Patrick Dunleavy  *Theories of the Democratic State* (2009) ch. 6, 7
Philippe Schmitter  ‘What democracy is…and is not’ *Journal of Democracy*, 2/3, 1991

Optional reading:
Anthony Downs  *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1958) ch. 8
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 Sep 29 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 the Country Reports button). Also search for articles about your country in *Journal of Democracy* and through the Olin library website.

Week 5
Oct 3

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  *Comparative Politics*, ch. 6 Schreurs on *Japan*
Steven Vogel  ‘Japan’s long road to competitive politics’ *Current History*, Sept 2010
The Economist  ‘Abe ascendant’ 11/12/2016

Outside lecture  ‘From Art to Action: A Different Response to Wartime Sexual Violence.’
Oct 4, 4.30  Anna Di Lellio (New York University), ALB 31

Week 5-6
Oct 5-10

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
Andre Gunder Frank  *The Development of Underdevelopment* (1966)

Week 6

THE SOVIET UNION
Oct 12
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?

Kopstein & Lichbach
Comparative Politics, ch. 7 Hanson on Russia
Leslie Holmes
'Totalitarianism' International Encyc. of Social & Behavioral Sciences 1984

Outside lecture Oct 13 4.30 pm Round table on the German elections Downey House 113

Week 7
Oct 17
Why did democracy fail to take root in Russia in the 1990s? What is the basis of Putin’s political power?

Dmitri Trenin
‘The legacy of Vladimir Putin’ Current History, Oct 2007
Peter Rutland
‘Russia’s flawed democracy’ Current History, Oct 1998
Peter Rutland
‘Imagining Russia post-Putin’ The Conversation, Aug 2017

Week 7
Oct 19
A test of your grasp of the theories and concepts introduced in the course so far. The in-class test lasts one hour and includes five short identification questions and two short essays.

Outside lecture Oct 19, 4.30 ‘Syrian refugees in Greece’ (film) Michel Bolsey (independent filmmaker)

Oct 23-24
FALL BREAK

Outside lecture Oct 25, 4.30 ‘US Foreign Policy in the Age of Trump’ Thomas Nichols (US NWC), PAC 001

Week 8-9
Oct 26-31
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 foreseeable future?

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:
Andrew Walder
‘Why China’s regime has staying power’ Current History, Sept 2009
Orion Lewis & Jessica Teets
Chris Buckley
‘Xi may be core leader, but he’s nervous’ New York Times 11/1/2016
Simon Hill
‘5 things to look for at the CCP congress’ The Conversation 8/30/17
The Economist
‘Chinese politics’

Outside lecture Oct 29 7.00 pm ‘Guns in America” Richard Slotkin(Wesleyan), Beckham Hall.
Week 10
Nov 2-7

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 authoritarianism. Why have there been so many military coups? Why are authoritarian leaders able to stay in power? Why do some launch modernizing reforms and not others? When do revolutions occur? Can they succeed?

Core reading:
Matias Lopez  ‘Elite theory’ Sociopedia (2013)
John Dryzek & Patrick Dunleavy  Theories of the Democratic State (2009) ch. 3
John Higley & G. Field  Elitism (1980) 1-68
‘Coup d’état’  govtintelligence.com

Optional reading:
Fareed Zakaria  ‘The rise of illiberal democracy’ Foreign Affairs, 76/6 Nov 97
Fareed Zakaria  ‘America’s democracy has become illiberal’ Washington Post 12/29/16
G. William Domhoff  Who Rules America website on current US elites
Alan Wolfe  ‘The power elite now’ American Prospect, 10/44, 1999
Samuel P. Huntington  Political Order in Changing Societies (1971) 1-58
Choe Sang Hun  ‘Meet Kim Yong Un’ New York Times 8/10/2017
Evgeny Morozov  ‘Silicon valley has been humbled’ The Observer 9/3/2017

Second assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Friday Nov 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 political forces exist in that country that could overthrow the exploitation there? Even if a revolution is not likely, what “progressive forces” could improve the lot of the oppressed?

Outside lecture  Nov 8, 4.30  ‘Inequality and democracy’ Matias Lopez (Univ. of Rio de Janeiro), PAC 001

Week 10 Nov 9

DISCUSSION SECTION – Elite theory

Week 11
Nov 14-16

SOUTH AFRICA

The collapse of the apartheid regime was a major triumph for democracy. Why did the Afrikaners agree to give up power? 24 years later, how is South African democracy holding up?

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
Optional reading:  Long Night’s Journey into Day (2000 documentary)
The Economist  ‘South African politics’ 5/20/2017
Freedom House  South Africa Country Report 2017
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 12
Nov 21

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:
The Economist ‘Indian politics’
Indrani Bagchi ‘A tale of two Singhs’ *Current History*, April 2011
Freedom House ‘India 2017’

Week 13
Nov 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?

Core reading:
James Gelvin *The Arab Uprisings* (2012)
Tina Rosenberg ‘Revolution U,’ *Foreign Policy*, 16 Feb 2011
CBS News *Tunisia: the spark* 60 Minutes, 20 Feb 2011
Larry Diamond ‘Liberation technology,’ *Journal of Democracy*, 21/3, July 2010, 69-83
Tarek Masoud ‘Has the door slammed on Arab democracy?’ *J. of Dem.* 21: 5 Jan 2015

Optional reading:
Eva Bellin ‘The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East,’ *Comparative Politics* 36/2, 2004, 139-157
Stephen Fish ‘Democracy’, ch. 7 in *Are Muslims Distinctive?* (2011)
Malcolm Gladwell ‘Why the revolution will not be tweeted,’ *New Yorker*, 10/4/2010
Scott Anderson ‘Fractured lands: How the Arab world came apart’ *N York Times* 8/14/16
Week 14    CONCLUSION
Dec 5-7

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 2017’ Freedom House
Francis Fukuyama  ‘Why is democracy performing so poorly?’, Journal of Democracy
                    26: 1, Jan 2015

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
The Economist  ‘Africa’s fragile democracies’ 8/20/2106

Third assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Friday Dec 1 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?

FINAL EXAM

Wed Dec 12, 9.00 am/Thur Dec 13, 2.00 pm

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.