

**DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP:
POLITICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

INSTRUCTOR: Peter Rutland, prutland@wesleyan.edu; tel. 2483; office hours in PAC 203, MW 10.30-12.00.

- ASSESSMENT:
- 1) Mid-term test in class on October 13. [15 points]
 - 2) Three 5-7 page assignments due on Friday Sept 30, Nov 4, and Dec 9. [15 points each]
 - 3) Final examination on Wednesday, December 14, 2.00-3.30. [15 points]
 - 4) Very short weekly quiz on the required reading (1 point for a correct answer, 2 points for an exceptional answer). [15 points]
 - 5) Extra credit, such as a 1-2 page report on an outside lecture, will earn 1-2 points per report. [6 points max]

Students are required to attend every class and to complete the required reading.
Do not use a laptop to surf the web or check email during class.

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. But these generalizations do not get us very far. Only by studying individual countries can we understand the variety of political and economic systems and the complexity of the modern world, despite the homogenizing process of globalization.

The focus of the course is the present. 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).

But this course is not just a survey of current events. The goal is 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 192 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 (Mexico, India, Iran, South Africa). The goal is to learn how to sift through the record and 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:	Robert Dahl	<i>Polyarchy</i> (Yale University Press, 1972)
	Jeff Kopstein & Mark Lichbach (eds)	<i>Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities and Institutions</i> (Third Edition: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
	Karl Marx & F. Engels	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (Signet Classic edition, 1998)

All the readings on the syllabus (except these books) have hyperlinks that will take you direct to the article in the Wesfiles folder for this course. If you have any problem accessing the readings, please email me!

Required or Core readings are 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. No test will require that you show knowledge of any specific optional reading, however.

There are many novels and movies that raise the issues in this course. These are two classic political novels that are available at Broad Street Books:

George Orwell, *1984* (1948)
Maria Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat* (2002)

THE ASSIGNMENTS

Each student will write case studies of three randomly assigned countries beyond the countries discussed in class. The case studies teach you how to find out information about a given country and place it into a coherent context. You also understand the inner logic of the three theories by applying them to specific countries.

In the assignments you are expected to apply in turn each of the three theories to each of three countries i.e. a liberal analysis of Country A, a Marxist analysis of Country B, an Elite Theory analysis of Country C. You will be allotted the three countries you will study in a random draw in the first class. You can ask the instructor to change your country allocation if you have a strong desire to do a particular country.

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.
- 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 or so 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) 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. Locate and use **at least one book**, to give you a sense of academic approaches to the country.

Use **at least four newspaper articles** from sources such as *Wash Post* or *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 BBC country profiles CIA World Factbook State Department country notes New York Times Encyclopedia Britannica The Economist Open Democracy Human Development Report Gapminder	<p>Annual country reports.</p> <p>Archive of recent articles on each country in the world. Note also the handy chronology of major political events.</p> <p>Basic facts.</p> <p>Detailed descriptions of institutions and recent events.</p> <p>Search the NYT for recent articles using the country box on the right.</p> <p>Type in a country's name and you will find a summary article plus on the top left a button 'Year in review' analyzing the major political events each year.</p> <p>File of articles on individual countries – not updated since April 2010.</p> <p>European site with lively articles about democratic prospects around the world.</p> <p>Development statistics, from the United Nations Development Project.</p> <p>Click on Gapminder World to load a striking graphics program using HDR data.</p>
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For the Marxism paper:

In Defense of Marxism World Socialist Website	<p>Theoretical articles and news analysis.</p> <p>Search for stories on your country.</p>
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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:	<i>Current History</i>	<i>The Journal of Democracy</i>	<i>World Politics</i>
	<i>Comparative Politics</i>	<i>Comparative Political Studies</i>	

Week 1
Sept 8

THE ROOTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

We are living in a democracy - but what exactly is a democracy? We begin by looking at the roots: Athenian direct democracy, moving on to the modern version combining individual rights and representative government that emerged in the 18th century.

<i>Core reading</i>	read at least two of:
Aristotle	Politics (350 BC), Book 4
Benjamin Constant	The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns (1816)
Michael Mann	‘ The autonomous power of the state ,’ in John B. Hall (ed), <i>States in History</i> (1987) pp. 109-36
Wikipedia	‘Human Rights’ ‘ The State. ’ ‘ Nation state ’
<i>Optional reading:</i>	
James Madison	The Federalist Papers (1787) no. 10
Alexis de Tocqueville	Democracy in America (1836) chs. 1-5

Week 2
Sept 13

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 does New Labour stand for?
How is the Tory-Lib Dem coalition working out?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, [Introduction](#), [ch. 1](#) and ch. 2 Rutland on [Britain](#)
Vernon Bogdanor ‘[The historic legacy of Tony Blair](#),’ *Current History*, March 2007
-- [The London Riots of 2011](#)

Week 2-3
Sept 15-20

FRANCE & GERMANY

The reconstruction of democracy after 1945 in France and Germany.
The workings of proportional representation and coalition governments; corporatism and the welfare state.
The rise of the European Union and its implications for democratic nation-states.

Kopstein & Lichbach ch. 3 Cirtautas on [France](#) and ch. 4 Gould on [Germany](#)

Optional reading:

Jackson Janes ‘[Merkel’s Germany](#),’ *Current History*, Mar 2007
Marc Plattner ‘[The European Union](#): Competing goals, conflicting perspectives,’
Journal of Democracy, vol. 14, no. 4, Oct 2003
Donald Horowitz ‘[Electoral systems](#): a primer for leaders,’ *J. of Dem*, 14, 4, Oct, 2003

Week 3-4
Sept 22-27

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN DEMOCRACY

How did democracy evolve as the right to vote expanded during the 19th and 20th centuries?
Why did it take so long for women to get the vote?
What is Anthony Down’s ‘median voter theorem’?
What is the relationship between capitalism and democracy?

Core reading:

Robert Dahl *Polyarchy* (Yale University Press, 1972)
Philippe Schmitter ‘[What Democracy Is...and Is Not](#),’ *Journal of Democracy*, 2/3,
& Terry Lynn Karl summer 1991

Optional reading:

Anthony Downs [An Economic Theory of Democracy](#) (1958) ch. 8
Robert Putnam ‘[Bowling alone](#): America’s declining social capital,’ *Journal*
of Democracy, 6/1, Jan 1995
Caroline Pateman ‘[Three questions about womanhood suffrage](#),’ from Caroline Daley &
Melanie Nolan (eds.) *Suffrage and Beyond*, 1995
Russell Dalton et al ‘[Understanding democracy](#),’ *Journal of Democracy*, 18/4, Oct 2007
Seymour M. Lipset ‘[The social prerequisites of democracy revisited](#),’ *American*
Sociological Review, vol. 59, Feb 1994

Week 4
Sept 29

JAPAN

Japan was the first non-European country to modernize itself. After the defeat of Japanese imperialism in 1945, it became a democracy – and a close US ally. How successful is the Japanese political and economic model? Japanese parliamentarism works through patronage and consensus: just how democratic is Japan?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 4 Schreurs on [Japan](#)
Steven Vogel ‘[Japan’s long road to competitive politics](#),’ *Current History*, Sept 2010

First assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Friday September 30 by 4.00 pm:

A liberal democratic analysis of country Z. How democratic is country Z? If not, why not? How could democracy in that country be improved or strengthened? What is the likelihood of that happening, and what kind of political developments would cause it to happen?

To research this paper you should start with the [Freedom House country reports](#) (scroll to bottom of page). Also search for articles about your country in the [Journal of Democracy](#) and through the Olin library website.

Week 5
Oct 4

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?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 8 Sil on [India](#)
Amartya Sen ‘[Democracy as a universal value](#),’ *Journal of Democracy*, 10/3, 1999

Optional reading:

Indrani Bagchi ‘[A tale of two Singhs](#),’ *Current History*, April 2011
Ashutosh Varshney ‘[India: Why democracy survives](#)’ *Journal of Democracy*, 9/3, July 1998
Sumit Ganguly ‘[Six decades of independence](#),’ *Journal of Democracy*, 18/3, July 2007
Sumit Ganguly ‘[India’s multiple revolutions](#),’ *Journal of Democracy*, 13/1, Jan. 2002

Week 5-6
Oct 6-11

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?

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels [The Communist Manifesto](#) (1848)

Optional reading:

Phil Gasper ‘[The meaning of the Manifesto today](#),’ *Socialist Worker*, 18 Nov 2005
Karl Marx ‘[The future results of the British rule in India](#)’ (1853)
Vladimir Lenin [Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism](#) (1916), ch. 7
The entire text is [online](#) here.
Andre Gunder Frank [The Development of Underdevelopment](#) (1966)

Week 6
Oct 13

MID-TERM TEST

A test of your grasp of the theories and concepts introduced in the course so far.
The in-class test will consist of five short identification questions and three short essay questions.

Week 7
Oct 18-20

RUSSIA

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? Where is Russia headed today?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 5 Hanson on [Russia](#)
Leslie Holmes ['Totalitarianism'](#), *International Encyc. of Social & Behavioral Sciences*

Optional reading:

Dmitri Trenin ['The legacy of Vladimir Putin'](#), *Current History*, Oct 2007
Peter Rutland ['Russia's flawed democracy'](#), *Current History*, Oct 1998
Peter Rutland ['What was communism?'](#), *Russian History*, 37/4, 2010, 427-47
Robert Ortung ['Russia 2011'](#), Freedom House, 2011
Lilia Shevtsova ['Medvedev's Potemkin modernization'](#), *Current History*, October 2010

Week 8-9
Oct 27-Nov 1

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 near future?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 6 Wu on [China](#)
Henry Rowen ['When will China be free?'](#), *Journal of Democracy*, 18/3, July 2007
New York Times [China 2011](#) (collection of news reports)

Optional reading:

Freedom House [China Country Report 2011](#)
Andrew Walder ['Why China's regime has staying power'](#), *Current History*, Sept 2009
Martin Dimitrov ['The resilient authoritarians'](#), *Current History*, Jan 2008
Bruce Dickson ['The future of China's party state'](#), *Current History*, Sept 2007
Orion Lewis [A China Model? Understanding the Evolution of a 'Socialist Market Economy'](#), (2009)
& Jessica Teets

Second assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted on Friday Nov 4 by 4.00 pm:

A Marxist analysis of country X. How would a Marxist assess the political and economic situation in country X? Is it stable or unstable? What classes or political forces exist in that country that could overthrow the colonial dependency or capitalist exploitation that prevails there? Even if a revolution is not likely, what "progressive forces" could improve the lot of the oppressed?

Week 9
Nov 3

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 provides a framework for explaining the persistence of authoritarianism. Why have there been so many military coups? Why are authoritarian leaders so adept at clinging to power? Why do some launch modernizing reforms and not others? When do revolutions occur? Can they succeed?

Samuel P. Huntington [*Political Order in Changing Societies*](#) (1971) 1-58
G. Field and John Higley [*Elitism*](#) (1980) 1-68
[‘Coup d’etat’](#) govintelligence.com

Optional reading:

G. William Domhoff [Who Rules America](#) website on current US elites
Alan Wolfe [‘The power elite now,’](#) *American Prospect*, 10/44, 1999
Timur Kuran [‘Now out of never: Element of surprise in the East European revolution of 1989,’](#) *World Politics*, 44, Oct 1991, 7-48
Jim de Fronzo [Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements](#) (1991), ch. 1.

Week 10
Nov 8-10

MEXICO AND LATIN AMERICA

Mexico had a revolution that led to one-party rule, but not Soviet-style socialism. In 2000 the PRI allowed a free election which was won by the opposition candidate, Vicente Fox. Mexico was not alone. In the 1990s all the Latin American countries, except Cuba, made the transition to democracy. How are they doing?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 7 Gill on [Mexico](#)
Freedom House [Mexico Country Report 2010](#)
Alejandro Toledo [‘Democracy with development,’](#) *Journal of democracy*, 41/4 Oct 2010

Optional reading:

Denise Dresser [‘Fox’s Mexico,’](#) *Current History*, Feb 2005
Jorge Castaneda [‘The year of the ballot,’](#) *Current History*, Feb 2007
Michael Shifter [‘Latin America’s populist turn,’](#) *Current History*, Feb 2005
Andreas Schedler [‘Mexico’s victory: The democratic revelation,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 11/4, Oct 2000
Abraham Lowenthal [‘Latin America at the century’s turn,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 11/2, April 2000

Week 11
Nov 15

SOUTH AFRICA

A major triumph for democracy was the more or less peaceful collapse of the apartheid regime. Why did the Afrikaners agree to give up power? Can South Africa be a model for other African states?

Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 10 Bratton on [South Africa](#)
Antoinette Handley [‘The new South Africa,’](#) *Current History*, May 2004

Optional reading continues on next page

Optional reading:

- Antoinette Handley [‘The new South Africa,’](#) *Current History*, May 2004
Mark Rosenberg [‘South Africa 2010,’](#) Freedom House, 2010
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 11
Nov 17

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY (pre 2011)

Guest lecturer: Anne Peters

Before 2011, the academic literature was trying to explain the absence of democracy in the Arab world. What kinds of political system are found in Moslem countries? Are Islam and democracy compatible?

- 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)

Optional reading:

- Yayha Sadowski [‘Political Islam: asking the wrong questions,’](#) *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, 2006: 215-40.
Larry Diamond [‘Why are there no Arab democracies?’](#) *Journal of Democracy* 21/1, Jan 2010, 93-112
Fares Braizat [‘What Arabs think,’](#) *Journal of Democracy*, 21/4, Oct. 2010, 131-138
Kavita Ramdas [‘Feminists and fundamentalists,’](#) *Current History*, March 2006
Vali Nasr [‘The rise of “Muslim Democracy,”’](#) *Jr. of Democracy*, 16/2, Apr 2005
Adrian Karatnycky [‘Moslem countries and the democracy gap,’](#) *Jr. of Dem*, 13/1, Jan 2002
Michael L. Ross [‘Does oil hinder democracy?’](#) *World Politics*, 53: 3, 2001, 325-361

Week 12
Nov 22

IRAN

Iran had a revolution in 1979 that introduced a unique modern theocracy.

- Kopstein & Lichbach *Comparative Politics*, ch. 9 Nasr on [Iran](#)
Bahman Baktiari [‘Iran’s conservative revival,’](#) *Current History*, Jan 2007
Max Rodenbek [‘An American in Iran,’](#) *New York Review of Books*, 17 Jan 2008

Optional reading:

- Stephen Fairbanks [‘Countries at the crossroads: Iran,’](#) Freedom House, 2007
Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis* (2003) Comic book and movie.

Week 13
Nov 29-Dec 1

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:

- New York Times* [Egypt 2011](#) (collection of news reports)
New York Times [Tunisia 2011](#) (collection of news reports)
Anonymous [Egypt: The Demonstrator’s Handbook](#) (2011)

Continues....

