

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

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ASSESSMENT: 1) Four 5-7 page assignments due on 28 February, 28 March, 25 April, and 11 May.
[20 points each]

2) Class participation. [20 points]

Students are required to attend every class and to complete the required reading.

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.

I will make extensive use of email to send out readings and additional short articles.

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.

READINGS

Required general readings, available in Broad Street Books:

Jeff Kopstein & Mark Lichbach (eds) *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities and Institutions*
(Third Edition: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
Robert Dahl *Polyarchy* (Yale University Press, 1972)
Karl Marx & F. Engels *The Communist Manifesto* (Signet Classic edition, 1998)

All the readings except these books are available on the Blackboard site.

Required readings are the first articles listed for each class.

Optional readings are extra sources that you might find useful when writing your assignments.

Extra credit will be given for students who use these additional theoretical and comparative sources.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

Each student will write case studies of three randomly assigned countries beyond the countries discussed in class. The case studies serve two purposes. First, they teach you how to find out information about a given country and place it into a coherent context. Second, they teach you how to apply the three theories.

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 must 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 particular 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 *Washington 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.

New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/index.html>
Go to the Country Page in the box on the right. There you will find links to other sites, and NYT articles

The *Washington Post* has excellent international coverage, but it stopped archiving its articles by country in 2004:
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/world/search/>

Encyclopedia Britannica is on the Olin website, on the Reference Tools page. Type in a country's name and you will find a summary article plus handy yearbooks analyzing the major political events.

Freedom House country reports: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=21&year=2007>

BBC Country Profiles http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
Note in particular the handy timeline for each country: a chronology of major political events.

The Economist www.economist.com/countries/ (Articles from the past year are free.)

CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

US State Department Country notes: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>

Library of Congress Country Studies: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>
These are thorough handbooks, but were written between 1986 and 1998 and have not been updated since.

University of Michigan Area Studies links <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/psarea.html>
One of the best sites listing various web sources on world politics.

For the Marxism paper, organized country-by-country: www.wsws.org/sections/category/news/news.shtml
For more polemical analysis: <http://www.marxist.com>

For data on all aspects of development, see the United Nations Development Project Human Development Report:
http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_en_indicator_tables.pdf

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

Two journals that you will find very useful for up-to-date surveys of contemporary world politics:

Current History *The Journal of Democracy*

Other examples of relevant academic journals:

World Politics *SAIS Review*
Comparative Politics *Comparative Political Studies*

Week 1
27 Jan

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, and the modern version combining individual rights and representative government that emerged in the 18th century.

politics.html	Aristotle	<i>Politics</i> (350 BC), Book 4 http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/
(1816)	James Madison	<i>The Federalist Papers</i> no. 10 (1787)
	Benjamin Constant	<i>The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns</i>
	Wikipedia.org	'Human Rights'

Optional reading:

<i>The Federalist Papers</i>	on the web at http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html
Alexis de Tocqueville	<i>Democracy in America</i> The whole text is on the web at: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/home.html

Week 2
3 Feb

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN DEMOCRACY

What does Dahl mean by the two dimensions of democracy?
How does Freedom House measure democracy in the contemporary world?
What is Anthony Downs' 'median voter theorem'?
What is the relationship between capitalism and democracy?
Under what conditions does Dahl believe pluralist democracy can emerge and flourish?

Robert Dahl	<i>Polyarchy</i> (1972)
Arch Puddington	'Freedom in the World 2008: Freedom in retreat?' http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=130&year=2008
Anthony Downs	<i>An Economic Theory of Democracy</i> (1958) ch. 8

Optional reading:

Russell Dalton et al	'Understanding democracy,' <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 18/4, Oct 2007
Robert Putnam	'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital,' in <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , Jan 1995, vol. 6, no. 1
John Markoff	<i>Waves of Democracy: Social Movements and Political Change</i> (1996)
David Held	<i>Models of Democracy</i> (1996)

Week 3
10 Feb

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?

Kopstein & Lichbach	<i>Comparative Politics</i> , chs. 1-3
Vernon Bogdanor	'The historic legacy of Tony Blair,' <i>Current History</i> , March 2007

Week 4
17 Feb

EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

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. The 2005 referendum and the future of the EU.

Kopstein & Lichbach	<i>Comparative Politics</i> , chs. 4, 5 and 13
Jackson Janes	'Merkel's Germany,' <i>Current History</i> , Mar 2007
Andrew Morovcsik	'Why Europe said no,' <i>Current History</i> , Nov 2005
Marc Plattner	'The European Union: Competing goals, conflicting perspectives,' <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , vol. 14, no. 4, Oct 2003
Donald Horowitz	'Electoral systems: a primer for leaders,' <i>J. of Dem</i> , 14, 4, Oct, 2003

Week 5

JAPAN

24 Feb

Japan was the first non-European country to modernize itself. After the defeat of Japanese imperialism, 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	<i>Comparative Politics</i> , ch. 6 on Japan
Arthur Alexander	'Japan's slow motion transition,' <i>Current History</i> , Sept 2007

First assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted by 28 February (11.59 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) at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2004/countries.htm> Also search in the *Journal of Democracy*.

Week 6

MARXISM AND IMPERIALISM

3 March

According to Marxists liberal democracy is a fraud that masks domination by the capitalists, and national politics are subordinate to global imperialism. What solutions does Marxism propose?

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848) Online at: http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/classics/manifesto.html
Phil Gasper	'The meaning of the manifesto,' <i>Socialist Worker</i> , 18 Nov 2005
Karl Marx	'The future results of the British rule in India' (1853)
Vladimir Lenin	<i>Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism</i> (1916) Online at: www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/
Andre Gunder Frank	<i>The Development of Underdevelopment</i> (1966)

Continued overleaf.....

Optional reading:

Andre G. Frank	<i>Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment</i> (1979)
Dietrich Rueschemeyer	<i>Capitalist Development and Democracy</i> (1992) ch. 2

7-22 March

SPRING BREAK

Week 7
24 March

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. 7 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
Kathryn Stoner-Weiss 'Countries at the crossroads: Russia,' Freedom House, 2007

Second assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted by 28 March (11.59 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 8
31 March

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. 8 on China
Henry Rowen 'When will China be free?,' *Journal of Democracy*, 18/3, July 2007

Optional reading:

Martin Dimitrov 'The resilient authoritarians,' *Current History*, Jan 2008
Bruce Dickson 'The future of China's party state,' *Current History*, Sept 2007
Thomas Gold 'Countries at the crossroads: China,' Freedom House, 2007

Week 9
7 April

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) pp. 1-58
G. Field and John Higley *Elitism* (1980), pp. 1-68

Optional reading:

(Gale Group)
Alan Wolfe
David Rothkopf

Development Doctrine and Modernization Theory (2001)
“The power elite now,” *American Prospect*, 10/ 44, 1999
Superclass. The Global Power Elite (2008)

Week 10
14 April

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
Amartya Sen

Comparative Politics, ch. 10
‘Democracy as a universal value,’ *Journal of Democracy*,
vol. 10, no. 3, July 1999

Optional reading:

Ashutosh Varshney
Sumit Ganguly
Sumit Ganguly
Alyssa Ayres

‘Why democracy survives,’ *Journal of Democracy*, 9/3, July 1998
‘Six decades of independence,’ *Journal of Democracy*, 18/3, July 2007
‘India’s multiple revolutions,’ *Journal of Democracy*, 13/1, Jan. 2002
‘Musharaff’s Pakistan,’ *Current History*, April 2004

Week 11
21 April

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
Antoinette Handley

Comparative Politics, ch. 10 on South Africa
‘The new South Africa,’ *Current History*, May 2004

Optional reading:

Jennifer Widner
Carol Lancaster
Michael Bratton
Mark Rosenberg

‘Africa’s democratization,’ *Current History*, May 2005
‘Development in Africa,’ *Current History*, May 2005
“Africa: the alternation effect,” *Jour. of Democracy*, 15/4, Oct. 2004
‘Countries at the crossroads: South Africa,’ Freedom House, 2006

Third assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted by 25 April (11.59 pm):

An Elite theory analysis of country Y. How would an Elite Theorist assess the political and economic situation in country Y? 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?

Week 12
28 April

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

What kinds of political system are found in Moslem countries? Are Islam and democracy compatible?

Pippa Norris &

Islam and the West: Testing the Clash of Civilizations Hypothesis,

2002

- Ronald Inglehart
Kavita Ramdas
Vali Nasr
Adrian Karatnycky
- 'Feminists and fundamentalists,' *Current History*, March 2006
'The rise of "Muslim Democracy,"' *Jr. of Democracy*, 16/2, Apr 2005
'Moslem countries and the democracy gap,' *Jr. of Dem*, 13/1, Jan 2002

IRAN

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

- Kopstein & Lichbach
Bahman Baktiari
Max Rodenbek
- Comparative Politics*, ch. 9 on Iran
'Iran's conservative revival,' *Current History*, Jan 2007
'An American in Iran,' *New York Review of Books*, 17 Jan 2008

Optional reading:

- Stephen Fairbanks
Marjane Satrapi
- 'Countries at the crossroads: Iran,' Freedom House, 2007
Persepolis (2003)

Week 13
5 May

CONCLUSION

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?
Is Zakaria correct in seeing a contradiction between individual rights and electoral democracy?
Has the global war on terror been good, or bad, for the cause of liberty?
What are the prospects for democracy in Iraq?

- 1997
- Arch Puddington
Fareed Zakaria
- Samuel P. Huntington
Jane Jaquette
- 'Freedom in the world 2008,' Freedom House
'The rise of illiberal democracy,' *For. Affairs*, 76/6, Nov
'After twenty years: The future of the Third Wave,'
Journal of Democracy, vol. 8, no. 4, October 1997
'Women and democracy,' *Jour. of Democracy*, 12/3, Jul 2001

Continued overleaf....

Optional reading:

- 1991
- Thomas Carothers
Samuel P. Huntington.
- Lisa Anderson (ed)
Adam Przeworski & M. Alvarez
Seymour M. Lipset
Ronald Inglehart
- 'Democracy's sober state,' *Current History*, Dec 2004
The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Cent.
Transitions to Democracy (1999)
Democracy and Development (2000)
'The social prerequisites of democracy revisited,' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 59, Feb 1994
Modernization and Post-Modernization.

Fourth assignment, 5-7 pages, to be submitted by 11 May (11.59 pm):

Write a paper on a topic of your own choice, to be agreed with the instructor.

Or write on one (and only one) of the following suggested topics:

- 1) Which of the three theories introduced in this course did you find the most useful in explaining the modern political world, and why?
- 2) Can the American system of democracy serve as a model for other countries around the world?
- 3) Is democracy on the advance or on the retreat in the world today?
- 4) What are the main strengths, and the main flaws, in the democratic system of government?