Democracy and Dictatorship

POSC 120 – Fall 2019
(M & W 8:30-9:40am)
(F 8:30-9:30 am) Willis 204

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Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 2-4pm.

Course Description

What explains the global shift towards nationalist populism in recent years? Is Russia a democracy? How do politics differ in Western Europe compared to the United States? Why did the Arab Spring occur in 2011 and not 1990? This course will explore these and other questions examining politics within different countries. The comparison of political institutions and behavior within different countries is referred to as Comparative Politics, a subfield of political science distinct from International Relations, which examines politics between countries.

In this course, we will explore the varieties of political institutions around the world, including both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Our examination of these institutions will always be theory driven – we will be looking to explain both the origins and implications of political institutions. Over the course of the term, you will learn to apply and investigate theories concerning the origins of democracy, how different political institutions (both formal and informal) influence factors such as ethnic conflict, economic development, political stability, and the provision of public goods such as environmental protection and education.

This course is coded as a Theoretical ACE (Academic Civic Engagement) course. As we learn about the variety of different political institutions around the world, we will also reflect carefully on our roles as citizens, both within our home countries, as well as within the globe.

Course Requirements and Expectations

Classroom discussion and participation will be a critical component of our classes. To facilitate insightful and interesting discussions, you are required to complete the assigned readings before each class and contribute to class discussions. The reading load will be up to 150 to 200 pages per week. There is no required text for the course for purchase in the bookstore – all readings will be made available electronically on Moodle. I also encourage
you to pay attention to current events around the world in the news, which we will discuss in class. I will occasionally email news articles analyzing current events which you will be responsible to read for class discussion. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due at 5:00pm on the date indicated in the syllabus. Please email an electronic copy to me at kfreeze@carleton.edu.

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on the following:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constitutional Convention Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Class Preparation, Attendance and Participation - 15%**

Attendance and participation is required. In preparation for each class, you are expected to come to class having read and thought about the readings for the day. You are also required to submit at least one comment, question or criticism on the reading for the day to the discussion forum on Moodle. These will be due 1 hour PRIOR to the start of class time. Submitting an adequate question or comment to Moodle for each and every class session will receive an 85% for the electronic portion of your participation grade. If I feel that your comments have been particularly insightful/useful for the discussion, this percentage will increase. I will provide feedback on your electronic participation around midterm.

In addition, you are expected to be an active participant in class as well. Half of your participation grade will be determined by participation in class, and half by your electronic participation.

**Case Study Project - 25%**

Full details of the assignment will be discussed in class.

**Constitutional Convention Project - 25%**

We will hold a mock constitutional convention for a newly independent but ethnically divided country. As part of this convention, each of you will have an assigned role, and will attempt to achieve an end result in the convention which you view as being the most favorable to yourself. In preparation for the convention, you will prepare a short memo outlining your strategy and expectations for the convention.

Following the conclusion of the convention you will turn in a short memo detailing what you learned from the convention and whether or not your expectations were borne out. 10%
of this grade will come from each of the memos, and 5% will come from your participation in the convention.

**Final Exam - 35%**

This will be a comprehensive final exam, self-scheduled during exam week. It will cover both factual and theoretical knowledge from the course.

**Course Policies**

**Grading Policies**

I will assign grades using the following scale: A (93.33), A- (90), B+ (86.67), B (83.33), B- (80), C+ (76.67), C (73.33), C- (70), D+ (66.67), D (63.33) D- (60) F (Below 60). I do not round your final grade up or down (so if you receive a 93.327, you will receive an A- for a final grade).

Here are several important details regarding my policy on course grades:

1. I will not receive grade complaints if more than two weeks have passed after the assignment has been returned. Before I review your grade you must first:
   - Wait 24 hours.
   - Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
   - Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not to vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”

   The second grade, whether higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.

2. Late assignments are not tolerated. Your grade will be lowered 5 points for each 24 hour period it is late (the exception is for the reading questions/comments, which will not be accepted if late). For example, if the assignment is due on Wednesday at 5:00pm and you complete it between Wednesday at 5:01pm and Thursday at 5:00pm, the highest grade you can make is 95. If you complete it between Thursday 5:01pm and Friday 5:00pm, the highest grade possible will be a 90. And so forth.

3. The ONLY acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are personal/family emergencies or illnesses. These exceptions are rare, and typically granted upon consultation between the student, their class dean, and myself.
Electronics in Class Policy

You are welcome to bring digital equipment (laptop, tablet, etc.) to class. However, I expect you to be responsible in your use of electronic equipment: please avoid visiting social networking sites, or otherwise browsing the internet on sites unrelated to the course. Individuals who abuse this privilege will be asked to turn off their computer. Please turn off all cell phones during class. If I observe that your use of electronic equipment is distracting you in class, I will let you know via email, and your in-class participation grade will suffer.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to abide by fundamental standards of academic honesty. A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/. All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, feel free to reach out to me for clarification.

Disability-Related Accomodations

It is the policy of Carleton College to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please let me know as soon as possible (during the 1st week of the semester), so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at http://apps.carleton.edu/disabilityservices/.
Course Schedule

Readings should be completed prior to class. I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule. I will alert you to any changes made in class, via email, and I will post the updated syllabus on Moodle.

PART I: Concepts and Definitions

Sept. 16: What is Comparative Politics?
- Introduction to the course.

Sept. 18: The Logic of Comparison

Sept. 20: Origins and Nature of the State
- Tilly, War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.

Sept. 23: Definitions of Democracy

PART II: Origins of Democracy

Sept. 25: The Modernization Hypothesis

Sept. 27: Economic Inequality and Democracy

Sept. 30: Natural Resources and Democracy
Oct. 2: Cultural/Religious Accounts of Democracy


Oct. 4: Democratic Transitions


Oct. 7: Origins of Democracy Case Study Class

- See assignment sheet for details for this class.

Part III: Outcomes of Democracy and Dictatorship

Oct. 9: Economic Growth


Oct. 11: Social Spending


Oct. 14: Life Satisfaction


Part IV: Varieties of Democracy

Oct. 16: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Regimes

Oct. 18: Electoral Systems

Oct. 23: Veto Players

Oct. 25: Democratic Accountability
  • H. Kitschelt. Linkages between citizens and politicians in democratic polities. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33(6-7):845, 2000

Oct. 28: Constitutional Convention
  • No Readings

Oct. 30: Constitutional Convention
  • No Readings

PART V: Outcomes of Varieties of Democracy

Nov. 1: VoDem and Fiscal Policy

Nov. 4: VoDem and Ethnic Conflict

Nov. 6: VoDem and Democratic Survival
Nov. 8: VoDem and Political Participation


PART VI: Varieties of Dictatorship

Nov. 11: Democratic Death

- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. *How democracies die*. Crown, 2018, chapters 1, 4 and 5.

Nov. 13: Personalistic/Military Dictatorships


Nov. 15: Party Dictatorships and Electoral Authoritarianism


Nov. 18: The China Model


Nov. 20: VoDict and Outcomes