

# Democracy and Dictatorship

POSC 120 – Winter 2020  
(M & W 8:30-9:40am)  
(F 8:30-9:30 am) Online via Zoom

---

**Instructor:** Kent Freeze

**Phone:** 507-222-4158

**Email:** kfreeze@carleton.edu

**Office:** Willis 413

**Office Hours:** Monday 10-noon and Thursday, 1-3pm.

## 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

This is an online class. Each class session will have a short video lecture attached to it (I will endeavor to keep these less than 30 minutes long). You should prepare for the class by first completing the readings for the day, then by watching the lecture video. We will then meet for a roughly 20-25 minute discussion on the readings and lecture video, typically following the worksheet for the day (I will split the class into two separate meeting times for these discussion groups).

There is no required text for the course for purchase in the bookstore – all readings will be made available electronically on Moodle. I would like you to print out the readings if at all possible, as reading the hard copy makes for a lower likelihood of distracted reading, and aids retention of information. I also encourage you to pay attention to current events around the world in the news, which we will discuss regularly. I will occasionally email news articles analyzing current events which you will be responsible to read for class discussion. Your grade will be based on the following:

Class Participation and Attendance	25%
Case Study Project	25 %
Constitutional Convention Project	25%
Final Exam	25%

### **Class Preparation, Attendance and Participation - 25%**

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, watched the video lecture, as well as filling out the student sheets for the day. I will not directly evaluate the daily student sheets, but I will call on students to provide their answers and feedback in the group discussion sessions. At the conclusion of each group discussion session, I will quickly evaluate your participation in that class on a three point scale (2 points reflects full engagement, 1 reflects that you were present but seemed disengaged/distracted, 0 reflects that you didn't show up or slept through the entire zoom session). I will provide feedback on your electronic participation around midterm.

In addition, I will do short (about 5-10 minutes) one-on-one meetings with you 5 times over the course of the term - an average of once every other week. These are intended to be low stress opportunities for you to review and evaluate the material we are covering, allow you to ask any clarifying questions, and make sure you are on track in the class. I will evaluate these sessions using the same 3 point scale for the class sessions.

10% of the grade for participation will come from the one-on-one meetings, 15% from the group discussion sessions.

### **Case Study Projects - 25%**

Full details of the assignment will be discussed in class. These will be both an individual and group based project involving a case study of a particular country or event.

### **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 - 25%**

This will be a comprehensive final exam. It will cover both factual and theoretical knowledge from the course. The final exam will be administered online at the scheduled time for the class (7pm-9:30pm, Saturday March 13), and will be open book. I will provide details on the exam format roughly 2 weeks prior to the end of term.

## **Course Policies**

### **Grading Policies**

I will assign final 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 a week has 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 5pm, 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.

## **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 Accommodations**

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

### Jan. 4: What is Comparative Politics?

- Introduction to the course.

### Jan. 6: The Logic of Comparison

- Arend Lijphart. Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American political science review*, 65(3):682–693, 1971

### Jan. 8: Origins and Nature of the State

- Tilly, War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.
- Hobbes, Leviathan, Chapter 13.

### Jan. 11: Definitions of Democracy

- R. Dahl. *On Democracy*. Yale University Press, 1998: Chapters 2-4 (pgs. 7-43).

## PART II: Origins of Democracy

### Jan. 13: The Modernization Hypothesis

- Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi Neto. Modernization: Theories and facts. *World politics*, 49(2):155–183, 1997
- Carles Boix and Susan Carol Stokes. Endogenous democratization. *World Politics*, 55(4):517–549, 2003

### Jan. 15: Economic Inequality and Democracy

- D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2006, Chapters 1 and 2.

### Jan. 18: Natural Resources and Democracy

- Michael L Ross. Does oil hinder democracy? *World politics*, 53(3):325–361, 2001
- Robert H Bates. The economics of transitions to democracy. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 24(01):24–27, 1991

### **Jan. 20: Cultural/Religious Accounts of Democracy**

- Ronald Inglehart. Trust, well-being and democracy. In Mark E. Warren, editor, *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge University Press, 1999
- M Steven Fish. Islam and authoritarianism. *World politics*, 55(1):4–37, 2002

### **Jan. 22: Democratic Transitions**

- Timur Kuran. Now out of never. *World politics*, 44(1):7–48, 1991
- Adam Przeworski. *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge University Press, 1991. Chapter 2, pgs. 51–95

### **Jan. 25: Origins of Democracy Case Study Class**

- See assignment sheet for details for this class.

## **Part III: Outcomes of Democracy and Dictatorship**

### **Jan. 27: Economic Growth**

- Robert J Barro. Rule of law, democracy, and economic performance. *2000 Index of Economic Freedom*, pages 31–51, 2000

### **Jan. 29: Social Spending**

- Carles Boix. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge Univ Press, 2003: Chapter 5: Democracy and the Public Sector 171–203.

### **Feb. 1: Life Satisfaction**

- David Dorn, Justina AV Fischer, Gebhard Kirchgässner, and Alfonso Sousa-Poza. Is it culture or democracy? The impact of democracy and culture on happiness. *Social Indicators Research*, 82(3):505–526, 2007

## **Part IV: Varieties of Democracy**

### **Feb. 3: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Regimes**

- José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland. Democracy and dictatorship revisited. *Public Choice*, 143(1-2):67–101, 2010 – Focus on pages 79-83.

### **Feb. 5: Electoral Systems**

- Arend Lijphart. *Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. Yale University Press, 2nd edition, 2012: Chapter 8, pgs. 130–157

### **Feb. 10: Veto Players**

- Jenna Bednar. *The Robust Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009: Chapter 2, pages 18–25.
- George Tsebelis and Jeanette Money. *Bicameralism*. Cambridge University Press, 1997: Chapter 2, pages 44–70.

### **Feb. 12: Democratic Accountability**

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

### **Feb. 15: Constitutional Convention**

- No Readings

### **Feb. 17: Constitutional Convention**

- No Readings

## **PART V: Outcomes of Varieties of Democracy**

### **Feb. 19: VoDem and Fiscal Policy**

- Jonathan Rodden. The geographic distribution of political preferences. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13:321–340, 2010

### **Feb. 22: VoDem and Ethnic Conflict**

- Joel Selway and Kharis Templeman. The myth of consociationalism? Conflict reduction in divided societies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(12):1542–1571, 2012

### **Feb. 24: VoDem and Democratic Survival**

- Juan J Linz. The perils of presidentialism. *Journal of democracy*, 1(1):51–69, 1990
- Scott Mainwaring and MJ Shugart. Juan Linz, presidentialism, and democracy: A critical appraisal. *Comparative Politics*, 29:449–472, 1997

## **Feb. 26: VoDem and Political Participation**

- Robert W Jackman and Ross A Miller. Voter turnout in the industrial democracies during the 1980s. *Comparative Political Studies*, 27(4):467–492, 1995
- Aníbal Pérez-Liñán. Neoinstitutional accounts of voter turnout: moving beyond industrial democracies. *Electoral Studies*, 20(2):281–297, 2001

## **PART VI: Varieties of Dictatorship**

### **Mar. 1: Democratic Death**

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

### **Mar. 3: Personalistic/Military Dictatorships**

- Lisa Wedeen. Acting as if: symbolic politics and social control in Syria. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(03):503–523, 1998
- Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer. Toward a structural understanding of coup risk. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 47(5):594–620, 2003

### **Mar. 5: Party Dictatorships and Electoral Authoritarianism**

- Jennifer Gandhi and Ellen Lust-Okar. Elections under authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12:403–422, 2009

### **Mar. 8: The China Model**

- Bell, Daniel. *The China Model*, Chapter 1, pgs. 14-62.

### **Mar. 10: VoDict and Outcomes**

- Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski. Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(11):1279–1301, 2007