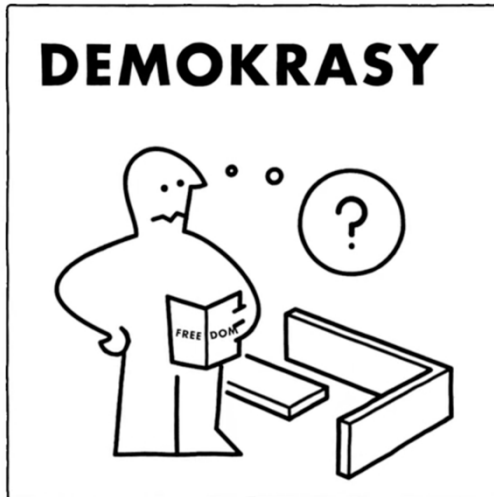


POSC 120: Democracy and Dictatorship

Carleton College, Spring 2021



Professor Devashree Gupta

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Spring Term Office Hours

Mondays, 11:30am-1:00pm

Tuesdays, 1:30pm-4:00pm

Thursdays, 6:00pm-8:00pm

Writing Assistant:

Ishmael Maxwell (maxwelli@carleton.edu)

Course Overview

This class provides an introduction to the study of comparative politics, one of the subfields within political science that focuses on the political dynamics of other countries. There are almost 200 independent states in the world, and within this group of countries, there is dazzling variety in institutional types, policies, political attitudes, levels of citizen participation, and economic performance.

It is the starting premise of this class that no single model of political governance outperforms all others across the board. Instead, the beauty—and complexity—of studying political systems around the world involves grappling with (1) how and why this diversity exists and (2) what the consequences are of these choices for people in different societies.

Comparative politics is a vast subject, so to fit it within ten weeks, we will do a tour through some of the “greatest hits” of the discipline, arranged by key questions that scholars ask about how countries might compare to one another. These include:

- Why are some countries more democratic and others more autocratic? What makes a country likely to be a democracy or be a dictatorship, and how easy is it for countries to transition from one type of government to the other?
- How do different societies embed their particular values and social norms in the political “rules of the game” and what consequences do these rules have for who has power, who is excluded, and the types of policies that are passed?
- How do different institutional configurations make some countries more or less wealthy? More or less corrupt? More or less likely to embrace social policies? More or less happy?

Course Materials

There are no books to purchase for this class (huzzah!). All readings and related course materials will be available through Moodle. You are expected to do all the assigned readings and activities before attending class, unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. You should have a copy of the readings (or your detailed notes on the readings) available for reference during class discussions.

Class Requirements

Your grade in the class will be based on six elements, which will be weighted as follows:

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|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Participation | 15% |
| 2. Response papers | 25% (2 @10% and 15% respectively) |
| 3. Small assignments | 10% |
| 4. Data project | 20% |
| 5. Concept quizzes | 10% (2 @5% each) |
| 6. Final paper | 20% |

Participation (15%)

This element consists of two distinct, but related elements:

- Participation requires you to contribute in an active way to class discussions. Quantity is not as important as quality. In fact, if you find yourself taking up a lot of air during class conversations, you will also get credit for amplifying the views of others and helping make space for quieter voices to be heard. Participation can happen in a variety of ways, including during Zoom class sessions as well as during asynchronous opportunities for reflection and comment.
- Participation also involves good citizenship. This includes various ways in which you signal respect towards others, including not checking your phone, not talking when others are, using the preferred names and pronouns of your peers, not making personal attacks, being on time for class, paying attention to the person speaking, and so forth. All of this translates to the online environment as well – to which I would also add: not letting your attention wander to the many other distracting things that live on your computer screen.

Response papers (25%)

You will have two short response papers, each of which will respond to a given prompt and also allow you to hone an element of your writing. The first paper will be worth 10% and the second one will be worth 15%. The first paper will be 3-4 pages; in it, you will focus on honing your ability to craft a strong argument. The second paper will be 4-5 pages; in it, you will focus on improving your use of evidence and data to support your arguments.

Prompts will be posted on Moodle at the end of Week 2 and Week 7, and due two weeks later.

You will be required to meet with the course Writing Assistant, Ishmael Maxwell to discuss the first response paper. For the second response paper, you are encouraged but not required to meet with Ishmael. You will also go through a peer review process to get additional feedback on your writing.

Small assignments (10%)

Throughout the term, there will be several opportunities to carry out short little assignments that are meant to be interactive and (hopefully!) fun, which will help you connect to the material in a somewhat hands-on way. Such assignments might include devising an experiment to test an idea from class, analyzing a world leader's social media feed, doing an interview of a friend or family member and describing your findings, etc. These small assignments are not meant to be particularly time intensive! There will be six of these throughout the term; you have up to one week from the date posted to turn them in. Your grade will be the average of your **four** highest-scoring small assignments for the term.

Data project (20%)

The data project investigates a foundational question for the class: what are the benefits (or drawbacks) of regime type (i.e., whether a country is a democracy or dictatorship) for the kinds of political "goods" that we might care about: economic growth and prosperity, political stability, gender equality, public health outcomes, etc. To facilitate this examination, you will work in small groups to research one such political "good" and explore its relationship to regime type. Does the kind of government in place make a difference for achieving this type of political good?

You will research the political "good" that you choose to better understand how scholars and policymakers think about the concept and how they might measure performance and outcomes (which is often not straightforward). You will then select a way to measure your concept and work collectively to gather some cross-national data to assess whether democracy or dictatorship is better at delivering this political good. Each member of the group will also do a deeper dive into a single case study to add some qualitative details to your analysis.

Your group will put together a presentation (meant to be viewed asynchronously); you can be creative in what this presentation entails (a recorded Zoom presentation with screen-shared slides, a short video, a podcast, a short graphic novel or zine, for example). You should clear more unusual ideas with me first. The presentation will be due at the end of Week 6; for the following week, everyone in class will view these presentations and leave comments and questions. Groups are responsible for responding to questions, and these responses will also be part of what is evaluated.

Concept Quizzes (10%)

There will be two concept quizzes during the term: one that reviews key concepts from Weeks 1-5 and one that reviews key concepts from Weeks 6-10. These quizzes will be asynchronous and you will have a window of 24 hours in which to complete each one. Quizzes will be short answer and timed and test your understanding of the material and the core ideas we cover in class. Quizzes will be timed so once you begin a quiz, you must finish it in the same sitting.

Final paper (20%)

The final paper will be an 8-10 (double-spaced) comparative case study where you will have a chance to put some of the things you learned this term to work. You will choose a question from a provided list and then investigate the answer via two country case studies. You will be responsible for getting enough done on your paper to have a working thesis, outline, and two full pages drafted in order to go through an in-class peer review exercise during Week 10.

Course Policies

All of the relevant course policies are linked on Moodle. Please make sure you read through them. Ignorance of the policies is no defense for violating those policies.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

For this class, I use a version of a “flipped” classroom where a substantial amount of what would normally be lecture is off-loaded to the readings and assignments. Why? Lectures are not nearly as engaging on Zoom as they can be in person; they’re not nearly as fun to give for me (I can’t hear you laugh at my exceptionally witty observational humor) and it’s very easy for you to zone out on your side of the screen. Therefore, a lot of that lecture is captured in what I’m calling pre-reading lessons and post-reading lessons. These are interactive modules with text and video and some (ungraded) self-quiz options to give you an introduction to the topic and context for the more specific scholarly material for the week. All pre- and post-reading lessons are linked on Moodle. The “flipped” lessons are substantive and substantial pieces of content, so please do not underestimate the time needed to go through them.

Remaining readings come from a variety of sources; many are from classic academic works of comparative politics (which presumes a scholarly audience); others are from introductory textbooks (and thus will be simpler and more straightforward); others still are from general interest publications (and will be the most accessible of all). Regardless of the type of reading, I expect you to (a) go through the reading carefully and take active notes, (b) jot down what is confusing and what questions the material raises for you, and (c) do all of this for the day the assignment is listed, unless otherwise noted.

The number in parentheses is the rough count of pages assigned for that day (**not including** the pre- or post-reading modules). This number reflects actual pages of content for which you are responsible and does not include title pages, citations, notes pages, appendices, etc.

TIP → If you have never taken a political science class before, a very short primer on how to read texts in political science (on Moodle) might be a helpful resource.

Foundations of Comparative Politics

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
March 29	Introduction to the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading Review this syllabus, the Moodle page to get a sense of the class. Jot down any questions you have. Create an introduction video for yourself on Flipgrid (link on Moodle and sent by email)
March 31	Ideological foundations of politics (56)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reading lesson on ideologies Redhead, Robin and Stephen Hood. 2017. "Liberalism." In <i>Political Ideologies</i>, Paul Wetherly, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press (read selected passages). Garnett, Mark. 2017. "Conservatism." In <i>Political Ideologies</i>, Paul Wetherly, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press (read selected passages). Gregson, John. 2017. "Socialism and Communism." In <i>Political Ideologies</i>, Paul Wetherly, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press (read selected passages). <p>Download the ideologies worksheet and fill it in as you read these pieces. Have it handy for Wednesday's class discussion.</p>
April 2	Application: ideology and pandemic responses (22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-reading lesson on ideologies Aaron, Henry J. 2020. "The Social Safety Net: The Gaps that COVID-19 Spotlights." Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute. <i>The Economist</i>. "COVID-19 Has Transformed the Welfare State. Which Changes Will Endure?" March 6th. Nguyen, Sen. 2020. "Vietnam's Pandemic Success is a Lesson for the World." <i>GlobalAsia</i>, 15:3. <p>Small assignment #1 posted: analyzing Angela Merkel's COVID speech</p>
April 5	The foundations of the modern state system (26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reading lesson on states and nations Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In <i>Bringing the State Back In</i>, Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Renan, Ernest. 1990 [1882]. "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" <i>Oeuvres Complètes</i>, vol 1: 887-807, reprinted in <i>Nation and Narration</i>, Homi K. Bhabha, ed. [trans. Martin Thom]. London and New York: Routledge, read selected passages. Post-reading lesson on states and nations
April 7	States and nations outside of Europe (40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reading lesson on states and nations outside of Europe Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. <i>States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control</i>. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, ch. 4
April 9	Application: state structure and oil dependency (21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schwarz, Rolf. 2008. "The Political Economy of State formation in the Arab Middle East: Rentier States, Economic Reform and Democratization." <i>Review of International Political Economy</i>, 15(4): 599-621. <i>The Economist</i>. 2020. "The Low Price of Oil Will Test Governments in the Middle East and North Africa." March 12.

		Prompts for response paper #1 posted online; papers due in two weeks. Watch writing video #1 and #2, and make an appointment with Ishmael to go over your drafts.
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Regime Types and Transitions

April 12	The foundations of regime types (27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on regime types • Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 2(3): 75-88. • Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Menu of Manipulation." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 13(2): 36-50. • Post-reading lesson on regime types <p>Small assignment #2 posted: classifying regime types</p>
April 14	Origins of democracy: distributive conflict (29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on origins of democracy • Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2005. <i>Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2.
April 16	Origins of democracy: modernization (24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." <i>World Politics</i>, 49(2): 155-183. [Note: you are not responsible for the authors' technical appendices, though you might find Appendix 1 useful].
April 19	Regime transitions and Pacts (53)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on regime transitions • O'Donnell, Guillermo and Phillippe C. Schmitter. <i>Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies</i>. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, ch. 1-5.
April 21	<p>Unpacted transitions (61)*</p> <p><i>*Note: half of you will read the Wood piece and half will read Bratton and Van de Walle for today's class.</i></p> <p><i>You should ALSO skim the introduction, main argument, and conclusion for the piece you do not read (pp. 862-868 and 883-885 in Wood; pp. 453-468, 484-489 in Bratton and Van de Walle). This will mean that both groups will read 45-46 total pages for today.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2001. "An Insurgent Path to Democracy: Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests, and Regime Transition in South Africa and El Salvador." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>, 34(8): 862-888. • Bratton, Michael and Nicholas Van de Walle. 1994. "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa." <i>World Politics</i>, 46(5): 453-489.
April 23	Failed transitions and backsliding (28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." <i>Comparative Politics</i>, 36(2): 139-157. • Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "On Democratic Backsliding." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 27(1): 5-19. <p>First response paper due on Moodle by 7pm CDT.</p>

Political Institutions and Governance

April 26	Democratic institutions: executive and legislative systems (26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on executive/legislative systems • Linz, Juan J. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 1(1): 51-69. • Horowitz, Donald L. 1990. "Presidents vs. Parliaments: Comparing Democratic Systems." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 73-79.
April 28	Democratic institutions: electoral systems (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on electoral design • Joshi, Devin K. 2013. "The Representation of Younger Age Cohorts in Asian Parliaments: Do Electoral Systems Make a Difference?" <i>Representation</i>, 49(1): 1-16. [Note: this article uses statistical analysis; you can refer to the guide to reading statistical results on Moodle for some guidance; more generally, read for the argument]. <p>Small assignment #3 posted: an electoral experiment</p>
April 30	Application: constitutional design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read background documents for constitutional design exercise • Jot down some notes about your preferred institutional rules, which rules you would accept (and what you would compromise) and any unacceptable rules. <p>First concept quiz goes live tonight. You will have 24 hours to complete it.</p>
May 3	Midterm break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading! Huzzah!
May 5	Challenges to democracy: populism (23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on populism • Mudde, Cas. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist." <i>Government and Opposition</i>, 39(4): 541-563. • Post-reading lesson on populism <p>Small assignment #4 posted: populism in political speeches</p>
May 7	Populism, democracy, and policy (29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canovan, Margaret. 1999. "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy." <i>Political Studies</i>, 47: 2-17. • Galston, William. 2018. "The Populist Challenge to Liberal Democracy." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 29(2): 5-19.

Special Policy Challenges

May 10	Economic development (23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reading lesson on economic development • Franko, Patrice. 1999. <i>The Puzzle of Latin American Economic Development</i>, 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, selected passages. • Van Elkan, Rachel. 1995. "Singapore: A Case Study in Rapid Development." Occasional Paper #119. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund. <p>Data project due by 7pm on Moodle. Everyone in class will have one week to view the other projects and leave three questions (not per project; three total). All groups should check their project sites and respond to questions as promptly as possible.</p>
May 12	Regime type and development (24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1993. "Political Regimes and Economic Growth." <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, 7(3): 51-69. • Treisman, Daniel. 2015. "Income, Democracy, and Leader Turnover." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 59(4): 927-942. [Note: this is another statistical article. Read for the argument – and if you need some help, take a look at the author's <i>Washington Post</i> presentation of the argument, linked on Moodle. BUT! This article is not a substitute for reading the original scholarly work!]
May 14	Development and COVID (22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceição, Pedro, et. al. 2020. "COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery." Human Development Perspectives Report. New York: United Nations Development Programme. <p>Prompts for response paper #2 posted today. A working draft is due in by MAY 19. Watch writing video #3 and #4. You are encouraged to make an appointment with Ishmael for the following week as well.</p>
May 17	Civil society and its promises (41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putnam, Robert D. 2000. <i>Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community</i>. New York: Simon and Schuster, ch. 1-2. • Borgonovi, Francesca and Elodie Andrieu. 2020. "Bowling Together by Bowling Alone: Social Capital and COVID-19." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i>, 265: 1-12. [Note: this is a pretty statistically driven article; use the guide to reading statistical work on Moodle, but generally, focus on reading for the broader argument and findings]. • Post-reading lesson on civil society <p>Small assignment #5 posted: civil society in your home town</p>

May 19	Civil society and its discontents (27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lorch, Jasmin and Bettina Bunk. 2016. "Using Civil Society as an Authoritarian Legitimation Strategy: Algeria and Mozambique in Comparative Perspective." <i>Democratization</i>, 24(6): 987-1005. Sombatpoonsiri, Janjira. 2020. "'Authoritarian Civil Society': How Anti-Democracy Activism Shapes Thailand's Autocracy." <i>Journal of Civil Society</i>, 16(4): 333-350. <p>Send your working drafts (minimum of three pages, please) to your peer reviewer by 7pm CDT.</p>
May 21	Writing workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading (apart from your peer reviewing buddy draft)
May 24	Social movements and protest (30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reading lesson on social movements Gupta, Devashree. 2017. <i>Protest Politics Today</i>. Cambridge: Polity, ch. 6.
May 26	State responses to protest (37)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gupta, Devashree. 2017. <i>Protest Politics Today</i>. Cambridge: Polity, ch. 7. <p>Small assignment #6 posted: think like a movement strategist</p>
May 28	Protest, democracies, and dictatorships (23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berman, Sheri. 2020. "Why Protests Threaten Dictatorships but Make Democracies Stronger." <i>Foreign Policy</i>, August 16. Mani, Kristina. 2020. "Using the Military to Quash Protests Can Erode Democracy—As Latin America Well Knows." <i>The Conversation</i>, June 8. Chen, Dan. 2016. "Review Essay: The Safety Valve Analogy in Chinese Politics." <i>Journal of East Asian Studies</i>, 16: 281-294. <p>Response paper due by 7pm CDT</p>
May 31	Class Choice Day (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD – class will pick a topic that we haven't covered yet and I will assign some readings so we can explore that topic together. <p>Second concept quiz goes live tonight. You will have 24 hours to complete it.</p>
June 2	Wrap-up and writing workshop for final paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading! (Well, apart from your peer review partner's draft) Speaking of: please circulate your provisional thesis, your working outline, and two pages of your draft (any two pages) to your peer review partner by 9pm CT on Monday.

Your final papers are due by **5pm on the last day of the exam period**. Please note that I am not authorized to grant any extensions to end-of-term work. If you need an extension, you should contact your class dean and discuss your circumstances with that person. I would appreciate a heads-up or initial discussion so I can meaningfully consult with the dean when they contact me for input on the request.