

GOVT 4: Politics of the World

Block 2; Rockefeller 001

Instructor: Katharine Aha
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to comparative politics, a subfield of political science which attempts to answer questions like: Why do some countries become democratic, while others do not? Why do some countries develop economically, while others' economies stagnate? Why do political institutions matter, and can they be tailored to best fit particular societies? In the first portion of class, we will discuss foundational topics like ideology, nationalism, and modern statehood. From there, we will cover democracy, authoritarianism, and the design of political institutions. In the last segment of the course, we will cover specific topics of importance for countries around the world, including political violence and economic development.

Aims and Outcomes

By the end of this course, your understanding of politics and the world we live in will have increased in three ways. First, you will learn the vocabulary that political scientists use to describe, classify, and explain political outcomes (How does a parliamentary system differ from a presidential system? What exactly is socialism?). Second, you will gain a deeper substantive knowledge of several important countries other than the United States, and one country of your own choosing. Finally, you will be able to use your knowledge to create and evaluate causal arguments about politics.

Canvas

I will use Canvas to post the syllabus readings, lecture slides, and other course information in an easily accessible location, and you will be expected to post assignments on Canvas throughout the semester.

Course Grade Components

10%: Participation
20%: Blog posts
5%: Blog comments
15%: Group presentation
10%: Final blog post
20%: Midterm exam
20%: Final exam

Participation

This course combines both lecture and discussion. Attending class regularly will help you considerably on the exams, and allow you to participate in discussions. I expect you to come to class prepared by having read and thought about the readings and any homework. Lectures are designed

with the expectation that you have read the assigned material before class begins. You will not do well in this course unless you do the readings.

Do not expect an A in participation just for showing up – regular attendance denotes average performance, which equates to a grade of 75%. Raising this grade depends on demonstrating that you have both read and thought about the reading. The only way for you to do this is to actively participate. An easy way to do this is to come to class prepared with comments and/or questions relating to the week’s readings, lectures, or how current events reflect what we are studying in class. I will give you ample opportunities to participate in class – please take advantage of this time!

If I feel that students are not reading the course material, pop quizzes will be given.

One of the goals of this class is to give you a safe environment in which to speak so that you can practice analyzing political events and applying the theories we learn in class to real-world events. To this end, we will frequently engage in discussion. Guidelines we will follow to help foster meaningful discussion:

- Be respectful. Different opinions are healthy and welcome in the classroom. However, it is essential that we treat one another with respect. You do not have to agree with someone’s view, but you do have to be respectful. Disrespectful students may be asked to leave the classroom. Please take a look at Dartmouth’s [Standards of Conduct](#) policy.
- Speaking in front of groups can be intimidating to some students; it is my goal to ensure that this class is a comfortable space where everyone can participate. Our discussions will be most successful when all voices are heard. If speaking in front of the class makes you nervous, come talk to me so that we can figure out some strategies to help you earn points towards your participation grade.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions! Everyone has different areas of expertise, and some concepts may be more confusing to you than others. I will be of limited help to you if you don’t speak up when you need clarification, and the discussion portions of the class will not work unless you participate.

Blog posts

Throughout the course, you will write a series of five blog posts. Your blog will focus on a country considered “partly free” by Freedom House (2019), and for each post (~350 words) you will analyze a component of the political rights and civil liberties in your selected country used by Freedom House to calculate their ratings. More specific instructions for each assignment will be posted prior to their due dates. You will also periodically be asked to comment on fellow classmates’ blog posts. If you have any concerns about sharing your work with classmates, please let me know and we can discuss an alternate arrangement. A blog post schedule can be found below.

Blog comments

Over the term, you need to comment on three different blog posts. These comments can be noting things that you found interesting in the person’s post, or drawing comparisons between the writer’s country and your own. Of course, you are welcome and encouraged to comment more than the required three times, and you are welcome to reply to comments on your own post. The Standards of Conduct expected during class applies to online discussion.

Final blog post

For your final blog post (~1250 words), you will use what you have learned both about your selected country and about comparative politics during the course of the semester to examine ways that your country can become more democratic in the future. How would you suggest that the country move toward improving democracy given its own unique history?

blog post schedule – all are due by 11:59 on the due date

9/30: country introduction

10/7: functioning of government

10/14: rule of law

10/21: freedom of expression and belief

10/28: electoral process

11/6: final blog post

Exams

During this course, we will have two exams, which are meant to test comprehension of the readings and lecture material. The midterm is on October 11, and the final is on November 22.

Group presentation

The group presentations are based on the country blogs. Having researched this country during the course of the semester, you are likely to be the class's expert on that case. You will be put into groups with other 'experts.' Each group will be asked to come to a consensus about democracy across their cases, and will present their findings to the class. This includes relevant comparisons and contrasts across their cases. There will be a Q&A after each presentation in which everyone is expected to participate. The group presentations will be held during the last full week of the term.

A note on X-hour: We will periodically be using the X-hour during the term to hold group meetings, presentations, and reschedule canceled classes (if necessary). I will let you know ahead of time if we will use the X-hour that week, but please do not schedule a regular commitment during that time.

Course policies

Academic Honor Principle

All work for this course falls under the college's Academic Honor Principle. Please find more information about the Honor Principle [here](#).

All work must be properly cited when appropriate. More information about citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and why it is important can be found [here](#).

Questions

If you have questions about the course, please come see me after class or during office hours. Please email me if you absolutely cannot come to office hours. Some questions may not be easily resolved by email, but we can set up another time to meet if necessary. Please do communicate with me early if you have any challenges that impact your performance in this course; I will not be able to help you if you do not ask for help.

Rescheduling Exams

If you have to miss class on the day of an exam or wish to reschedule an exam, then you must write and explain beforehand in all but the most unusual circumstances. If you are going to miss an exam for an event you know about well in advance, please come speak to me early in the semester (ie in first week or two of class) so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Please note that final exams are scheduled by the college, and cannot be rescheduled unless there two exams are scheduled at the same time, or three exams scheduled on the same day. If this is the case, please let me know as early in the term as possible so we can make arrangements.

Religious Observances:

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Student accessibility

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the [Student Accessibility Services office](#) (Carson Hall, Suite 125, 646-9900). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Mental health

The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate dean (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/>), Counseling and Human Development (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/>), and the Student Wellness Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthcd/>).

Religious Observances:

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Computers, cell phones, and additional info

I would like you to bring your laptops to class in order to access electronic resources - however, I expect you to use them for activity related to this course. Playing on the Internet during class is highly disrespectful to people who are trying to pay attention. I may not call you out for being on another site during class, but I will notice, and it will affect your final grade. You may not have your laptops open during any sort of student presentation. If, during the course of the semester, I see that the laptops are acting as more of a distraction than a help, I reserve the right to restrict their usage.

Do not use your cell phone during class. I can tell when you're using it, and it will definitely impact your participation grade.

As a general rule, I will not email you your grades, nor will I discuss your grades with you within 24 hours of handing graded assignments back. That being said, if you have questions about my comments on your assignments, I am happy to talk to you. If you want me to regrade something, you will need to write a few (at least three) paragraphs responding specifically to my written comments and explaining why you feel you deserve a higher grade.

Course Schedule

Section 1: Foundational concepts

- September 16 & 18 & 20: **Introduction to Political Science/Comparative Politics**
 - o Readings:
 - 9/18:
 - Dickovick, J. Tyler and Jonathan Eastwood. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases 2nd Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - o “Chapter 1: The Comparative Approach: An Introduction” (skim)
 - o “Chapter 2: Theories, Hypotheses, and Evidence”
 - 9/20:
 - Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.”
 - Freedom House. 2019. “Methodology 2019.”
- September 23 & 25: **The State**
 - o Readings:
 - 9/23:
 - Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
 - o “Chapter 1: Cities and States in World History”
 - Read sections “States in History” (pp 1-5), “Logics of Capital and Coercion” (pp 16-20), “War Drives State Formation and Transformation” (pp 20-28), “Long Trends and Interactions” (pp 28-33); Skim section “Available Answers” (pp 5-16)
 - 9/25:
 - Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*
 - o “Chapter 7: The Democratic Route to Modern Society”
 - Read sections highlighted on pdf
 - o “Chapter 8: Revolution from Above and Fascism”
 - Read sections highlighted on pdf
 - o “Chapter 9: The Peasants and Revolution”
 - Read sections highlighted on pdf

- September 27 & 30 & October 2: **Nationalism**
 - o Readings:
 - 9/27:
 - Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Edited by Clifford Geertz. New York: Basic Books.
 - o Read sections I-II (IV and V are optional)
 - Nagel, Joane. 1994. "Constructing Ethnicity." *Social Problems* 41(1): 152-176.
 - 10/2:
 - Fearon, James. 1995. "Ethnic War as a Commitment Problem." Presented at the 1994 Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association, New York.
 - o Read sections "Introduction" (pp 1-4), "The (ir)rationality of ethnic violence" (pp 4-6), "The War in Croatia" (pp 15-20), "Conclusions" (pp 21-24)
 - o Skim "The Commitment Problem in Plural Societies" (pp 6-14)

Section 2: Democracy and Authoritarianism

- October 4 & 7 & 9: **Democracy and Democratization**
 - o Readings:
 - 10/4:
 - Volokh, Eugene. May 13, 2015. "Is the United States of America a Republic or a Democracy?" *The Washington Post*.
 - 10/7:
 - Przeworski, Adam and Limongi, Fernando. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49(2): 155-183.
 - Boix, Carlos and Susan C. Stokes. 2003. "Endogenous Democratization." *World Politics* 55(4): 517-549.
 - 10/9:
 - O'Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
 - o "Chapter 2: Defining Some Concepts (and Exposing Some Assumptions)"
 - Read pages 6-8
 - o "Chapter 3: Opening (and Undermining) Authoritarian Regimes"
 - o "Chapter 4: Negotiating (and Renegotiating) Pacts"

October 11: Exam 1

- October 14 & 16 & 18: **Varieties of Authoritarianism**
 - o Readings:
 - 10/14:

- Svobik, Milan W. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - “Chapter 1: Introduction – The Anatomy of Dictatorship”
- 10/16:
 - Gandhi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar. 2009. “Elections Under Authoritarianism.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 403-422.
- 10/18:
 - Woodward, Colin. June 17, 2015. “Europe’s New Dictator.” *Politico*.
 - Applebaum, Anne. December 22, 2016. “Illiberal Democracy Comes to Poland.” *The Washington Post*.
 - Krugman, Paul. August 27, 2018. “Why It Can Happen Here.” *The New York Times*.

Section 3: Institutions

- October 21 & 23: **Federalism, Legislatures and Elections**
 - Readings:
 - 10/21:
 - Beramendi, Pablo. 2009. “Federalism.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Edited by Carlos Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - 10/23:
 - Sisk, Timothy D. 2017. *Elections, Electoral Systems, and Party Systems: A Resource Guide*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
- October 25 & October 28: **Political Parties**
 - Readings:
 - 10/25:
 - Katz, Richard S. 2008. “Political Parties.” In *Comparative Politics*. Edited by Daniele Caramani. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - Caramani, Daniele. 2008. “Party Systems.” In *Comparative Politics*. Edited by Daniele Caramani. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - 10/28:
 - Shuster, Simon. “The Populists.” *TIME*.
- October 30 & November 1 & 4: **Presidential and Parliamentary Systems**
 - Readings:
 - 10/30:
 - Linz, Juan J. 1990. “The Perils of Presidentialism.” *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69.
 - Mainwaring Scott and Matthew S. Shugart. 1997. “Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal.” *Comparative Politics* 29(4): 449-471.
 - 11/1:
 - Kluver, Heike and Jae-Jae Spoon. July 23, 2019. “Across Europe,

coalition governments are hurting political parties that join them.”
The Washington Post. (Monkey Cage)

- 11/4:
 - Hough, Dan. September 25, 2017. “Building a New German Coalition Government Won’t Be Easy – Here’s Why.” *The Washington Post*. (Monkey Cage)

Section 4: Outcomes

- November 6: **Political violence**
 - Readings:
 - 11/6:
 - Lichbach, Mark Irving. 1995. *The Rebel’s Dilemma*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
 - “Chapter 1: The Problem Defined”
 - Read sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5
 - “Chapter 2: The Approach Adopted”
- November 8 & 11: **Political Economy and the Welfare State**
 - Readings:
 - 11/8:
 - Hall, Peter A. and David Soskice. 2001. “An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism.” In *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Edited by Peter A. Hall and David Soskice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - Read through p 33
 - 11/11:
 - Estevez-Abe, Margarita, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2001. “Social Protection and the Formation of Skills: A Reinterpretation of the Welfare State.” In *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Edited by Peter A. Hall and David Soskice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- November 13 & 14 (X-hour) & 15: **Group presentations**
- November 18: **Wrap-up**

Final: Friday, November 22, 3:00pm