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Government 157
Wesleyan University
Fall 2021

Office Hours:
Tues. & Weds., 2:00-3:30 PM
110 Mt Vernon Street, Office 204

Class Meetings:
Mon. & Weds., 10:50 AM-12:10 PM
Boger 114

Democracy and Dictatorship: Politics in the Contemporary World

World events in the past three decades have underscored the importance of rethinking old questions about democracy: what it means, why it matters, what sorts of institutions can embody it, and what can be done to establish, defend, and deepen it. This course will explore these issues in the light of the experiences of the United States, Sweden, Russia, and Tanzania.

The course begins by exploring conceptual and normative issues related to democracy, then reviews how democracy is being studied in contemporary political science, focusing on cognitive biases that affect political participation and on democratic consolidation and backsliding.

The course then proceeds to four country studies, starting with the United States. The topics addressed in the US section are who has the right to vote, who actually does vote, why Biden won the 2020 election, whether US democracy is eroding or being dismantled, and how the Trump and Biden administrations have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The second country study is Sweden, where we'll study basic political institutions, the political party system, the welfare state, and contemporary politics, including the rise of the populist right and the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The third country study is of Russia and the former Soviet Union. We examine Marxism and Leninism, the ideologies that influenced the Soviet political system, review the historical legacies that have influenced post-transition Russian leaders, characterize the Russian regime under Putin, and assess Russia's pandemic response.

The fourth country study is Tanzania, where we explore the pre-colonial political system of the Makonde (one of Tanzania's larger ethnolinguistic groups), inquire as to why Tanzania has suffered less ethnic conflict than neighboring countries, evaluate Julius Nyerere's effort to create a democratic one-party state, and investigate democratic backsliding and pandemic response under the late president John Magufuli and the current president Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Course Requirements

The course grade will be based on reading quizzes, a short (5-6 page) paper, three in-class blue-book exams, and class participation.

Summary of Due Dates and Final Grade Weightings

Reading quizzes		30%
First Paper	Oct 8 (Fr)	15%
First Exam	Oct 27 (We)	15%
Second Exam	Nov 17 (We)	15%
Third Exam	Dec 8 (We)	15%
Class Participation		10%

Reading Quizzes

The quizzes are posted on the Moodle segment for each class session. They involve multiple-answer questions on each reading. Most class sessions have two readings, although some have one or three readings. The multiple-answer questions each have four possible answers, only one of which is correct. The total number of questions on each quiz varies from 2 to 4, depending on how many readings were assigned and how many I thought up. The quizzes are designed (1) to highlight important issues in the reading, (2) to acquaint you with the method of multiple working hypotheses, (3) to help you learn how to extract information from sources, and (4) to communicate information. The quiz questions can be challenging, but are never deliberately tricky or funny. If you keep up and do the reading attentively, they won't give you much trouble. You are allowed, indeed encouraged, to see your questions *before* you do the reading, the better to learn how to extract information from your source. The quizzes on each class session open up when the previous class session ends, and must be completed by 9:30 AM on the day for which the reading is assigned.

You will rarely have much luck Googling for the answer to a quiz question, because most of the questions are not about factual matters, but about an author's interpretation of an historical process or event. Also, you are honor-bound not to ask your classmates or anyone else for assistance on the quizzes. "Deception concerning adherence to the conditions set by the instructor for a formal academic exercise" is [Provision 5 of the Wesleyan Honor Code](#). The quiz is a formal academic exercise, and the conditions I am setting for it are that you may neither request assistance from anyone on your quiz questions, nor may you give assistance to anyone else on their quiz questions. That said, asking a classmate for assistance isn't going to do you much good, because the questions you will get on each reading are selected randomly from a much larger pool of questions. There are many multiple-choice questions in the pool for each class session, and the random process will select only a few of them. Accordingly, it is statistically unlikely that whomever you might ask for assistance will have gotten the same questions that you have received.

Paper

The first assignment is a 5-6 page (double-spaced) paper on the quality of democracy in the United States. It should be uploaded to the course Moodle by 5 PM Friday, October 8.

You will be asked to (1) identify defects in the quality of democracy in the United States, (2) assess whether those defects drop the United States below the threshold of polyarchy ("minimalist" democracy), (3) propose a single constitutional, legal, or regulatory change that would either make US democracy better or keep it from becoming worse, and (4) defend the desirability and feasibility of your proposed change against counter-arguments that it would be undesirable, infeasible, or both.

No outside reading need be done. The course readings and your general knowledge should suffice for you to complete the paper. Your grade will be based mostly on the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument and on your ability to support it by addressing, criticizing, and building on points in the assigned reading. The paper must contain specific citations, with page numbers, to most of the readings assigned for the class sessions from September 8 to October 6.

Examinations

The course also involves three closed-book, closed-note, in-class blue-book exams. The first exam takes place during the class period on Wednesday, October 27. It covers the October 11-20 class sessions and the assigned readings from those sessions. The second exam takes place during the class period on Wednesday, November 17. It covers the November 1 to November 15 class sessions and the assigned readings that focus on Marxism and Leninism, the former Soviet Union, and Russia. The third exam takes place during the class period on Wednesday, December 8. It covers the November 22 to December 6 class sessions and the assigned readings that focus on Tanzania.

Honor Code

Any instance of cheating or plagiarism will suffice for a grade of "F" for the entire course.

Electronics

Cell phones, laptops, tablets, digital assistants, and other potentially disruptive or distracting electronic devices should be stowed away and not consulted at any time during the class session.

Obtaining Course Readings

All readings are available on the course Moodle site. No books are required for this course.

Students with Disabilities

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021 or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

Religious/Spiritual Observance Resources:

If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at dleipziger@wesleyan.edu or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>.

For a list of a religious holidays celebrated by members of the Wesleyan community, go to Wesleyan's Multifaith calendar which can be found at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/multifaith-calendar.html>.

Title IX Resources

If trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Title IX Coordinator, at dcolucci@wesleyan.edu, or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements.

Summary of Course Schedule

Mo Sep 6 Introduction to the Course

1. Democracy: Initial Considerations

1.1. Conceptual and Normative issues

We Sep 8 Conceptualizing and Justifying Democracy

Mo Sep 13 Measuring Democracy

1.2. Democracy in Contemporary Political Science

We Sep 15 Democracy, Political Knowledge, and Political Decision-Making

Mo Sep 20 Democratic Consolidation and Democratic Backsliding

2. Democracy: Country Studies

2.1 The United States

We Sep 22 Who Has the Right to Vote?

Mo Sep 27 Who Actually Does Vote?

We Sep 29 The 2020 Presidential Election in the United States

Mo Oct 4 Erosion of Democracy in the United States?

We Oct 6 The United States: Politics and Pandemic Response

Fr Oct 8 Democracy/USA paper due

2.2. Sweden

Mo Oct 11 Sweden's Political Institutions and Party System

We Oct 13 Why Is There Social Democracy in Sweden, But Not in the United States?

Mo Oct 18 The Welfare State in Sweden and the United States

We Oct 20 Sweden: Politics and Pandemic Response

We Oct 27 Sweden Exam

2.3. Russia and the former Soviet Union

Mo Nov 1 Marxism

We Nov 3 Leninism

Mo Nov 8 Lenin, Russia, and Revolution

We Nov 10 Stalinism and the Collapse of Communism

Mo Nov 15 Russia: Politics and Pandemic Response

We Nov 17 Russia/USSR Exam

2.4. Tanzania

Mo Nov 22 Political Authority in Pre-Colonial Tanganyika

Mo Nov 29 The Depoliticization of Ethnicity in Mainland Tanzania

We Dec 1 Democracy and the One-Party State in Tanzania

Mo Dec 6 Tanzania: Politics and Pandemic Response

We Dec 8 Tanzania Exam

TOPICS AND READINGS

Mo Sep 6 Introduction to the Course

No assigned reading

1. Democracy: Initial Considerations

1.1. Conceptual and Normative Issues

We Sep 8 Conceptualizing and Justifying Democracy

Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
Chapter 4 (35-43), Chapter 8 (83-99).

Sen, Amartya (1999). "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy*
10 No. 3 (July), 3-17.

Mo Sep 13 Measuring Democracy

Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder (2018).
"Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement." Chapter
5 in Clark, Golder, and Golder, *Principles of Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed.
Washington, DC: CQ Press, 145-174.

1.2. Democracy in Contemporary Political Science

We Sep 15 Democracy, Political Knowledge, and Political Decision-Making

Brennan, Jason (2016). *Against Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University
Press, Chapter 2 (23-53).

Mo Sep 20 Democratic Consolidation and Democratic Backsliding

Schedler, Andreas (1998). "What is Democratic Consolidation?" *Journal of
Democracy* 9 No. 2 (April), 91-107.

Svolik, Milan W. (2019). "Polarization versus Democracy." *Journal of Democracy*
30 No. 3 (July), 20-32.

2. Democracy: Country Studies

2.1. The United States

We Sep 22

Who Has the Right to Vote?

Massicotte, Louis, André Blais, and Antoine Yoshinaka (2004). "Who Has the Right to Vote?" In Massicotte, Blais, and Yoshinaka, *Establishing the Rules of the Game*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chapter 2 (15-39).

Fraga, Bernard L. (2018). "Race and Turnout in Historical Context." In Fraga, *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (20-52).

Mo Sep 27

Who Actually Does Vote?

DeSilver, Drew (2018). "US Trails Most Developed Countries in Voter Turnout." Pew Research Center, May 21, pp. 1-6.

Shaw, Daron, and John Petrocik (2020), "American Voter Turnout." In Shaw and Petrocik, *The Turnout Myth: Voting Rates and Partisan Outcomes in American National Elections*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2 (20-52).

Green, Donald P., and Alan S. Gerber (2010). "Introduction to Social Pressure and Voting: New Experimental Evidence." *Political Behavior* 32 No. 3 (September), 331-336.

We Sep 29

The 2020 Presidential Election in the United States

Burden, Barry C. (2021). "The 2020 Presidential Election Verdict." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 51 No. 2 (June), 244-272.

Mo Oct 4

Erosion of Democracy in the United States?

Roberts, Kenneth M. (2019). "Parties, Populism, and Democratic Decay: A Comparative Perspective on Political Polarization in the United States." In Kurt Weyland and Raúl L. Madrid, eds., *When Democracy Trumps Populism: European and Latin American Lessons for the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5, 132-153.

Madrid, Raúl L., and Kurt Weyland (2019). "Conclusion: Why US Democracy Will Survive Trump." In Kurt Weyland and Raúl L. Madrid, eds., *When Democracy Trumps Populism: European and Latin American Lessons for the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6, 154-186.

We Oct 6 USA: Politics and Pandemic Response

Watch: Frontline: The Virus: What Went Wrong? (PBS, aired 16 June 2020)
<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-virus-what-went-wrong-mk79yu/>

Fr Oct 8 **Democracy/USA paper due**

Please review the assignment sheet posted on the course Moodle and upload your paper to the Moodle by 5 PM.

2. Democracy: Country Studies

2.1. Sweden

Mo Oct 11 Sweden's Political Institutions and Party System

Lijphart, Arend (1991). "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 2 No. 1 (Winter), 72-84.

Albertus, Michael, and Victor Menaldo (2018). "Sweden: From Agrarian Oligarchy to Progressive Democracy." In Albertus and Menaldo, *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6 (174-208).

We Oct 13 Why Is There Social Democracy in Sweden, But Not in the United States?

Foner, Eric (1984). "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?" *History Workshop* 17 (Spring), 57-80

Seymour Martin Lipset (1983), "Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working Class Politics." *American Political Science Review* 77 No. 1 (March), 1-18.

Mo Oct 18 The Welfare State in Sweden and the United States

Steinmo, Sven (2010). "Sweden: The Evolution of a Bumble Bee." Chapter 2 in Steinmo, *The Evolution of Modern States: Sweden, Japan, and the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 30-86.

Lynch, Julia F. (2014). "A Cross-National Perspective on the American Welfare State." In Daniel Béland, Christopher Howard, and Kimberly J. Morgan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Social Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 7 (112-132).

We Oct 20 Sweden: Politics and Pandemic Response

Rydgren, Jens, and Sara van der Meiden (2019). "The Radical Right and the End of Swedish Exceptionalism." *European Political Science* 18 No. 3 (September), 439-455.

Winblad, Ulrika, Anna-Karin Swenning, and Douglas Spangler (2021). "Soft Law and Individual Responsibility: A Review of the Swedish Policy Response to COVID-19." *Health Economics, Policy and Law*. Online before print, August 2021, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744133121000256>

We Oct 27 Sweden Exam (no new readings)

2.3. Russia and the former Soviet Union

Mo Nov 1 Marxism

Marx, Karl (1844/1848). "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844"; "The Communist Manifesto." Both in David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx: Selected Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 75-96, 221-247.

We Nov 3 Leninism

Lenin, V. I. (1902). "What Is To Be Done?" In Henry M. Christman, *Essential Works of Lenin*. New York: Dover Publications, 1987. Selections, repaginated 1-37.

Lenin, V. I. (1917). *State and Revolution*. Annotated and introduced by Todd Chretien. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014. Selections, pp. 41-82.

Mo Nov 8 Lenin, Russia, and Revolution

Chamberlin, William Henry (1935/1965). *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921*, Vol. 1. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1-17.

DeBardeleben, Joan (1992). "The Emergence of the Soviet State." In Mark Kesselman and Joel Krieger, eds., *European Politics in Transition*, 2nd ed. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 513-543.

We Nov 10 Stalinism and the Collapse of Communism

"Z" [Martin Malia] (1990). "To the Stalin Mausoleum." *Dædalus* 119 No. 1 (Winter), 295-340.

Mo Nov 15 Russia: Politics and Pandemic Response

McFaul, Michael (2018). "Choosing Autocracy: Actors, Institutions, and Revolution in the Erosion of Russian Democracy." *Comparative Politics* 50 No. 3 (April), 305-325.

Frye, Timothy (2021). *Weak Strongman: The Limits of Power in Putin's Russia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Chapters 2 and 3, 15-49.

We Nov 17 Russia/USSR Exam (no new readings)

2.4. Tanzania

Mo Nov 22 Political Authority in Pre-Colonial Tanganyika

Iliffe, John (1979). "Tanganyika in 1800." In Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (6-25).

Liebenow, J. Gus (1971). "Fragmentation and Cohesion in Traditional Makonde Society." In Liebenow, *Colonial Rule and Political Development in Tanzania: The Case of the Makonde*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. Chapter 3 (40-71).

Mo Nov 29 The Depoliticization of Ethnicity in Mainland Tanzania

Malipula, Mrisho (2014). "Depoliticised Ethnicity in Tanzania: A Structural and Historical Narrative." *Afrika Focus* 27 No. 2, 49-70.

We Dec 1 Democracy and the One-Party State in Tanzania

Nyerere, Julius (1966). *Freedom and Unity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 103-106, 195-203.

McHenry, Dean (1994). "Democracy and Socialism." In McHenry, *Limited Choices: The Political Struggle for Socialism in Tanzania*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. Chapter 4, 47-74.

Humana, Charles (1992). *World Human Rights Guide*. London: Hutchinson, 3-10, 306-309 (Sweden), 314-318 (Tanzania), 350-353 (USA).

Mo Dec 6 Tanzania: Politics and Pandemic Response

Paget, Dan (2021). "Tanzania: The Authoritarian Landslide." *Journal of Democracy* 32 No. 2 (April), 61-76.

Cheeseman, Nic, Hilary Matfess, and Alitalali Amani (2021). "Tanzania: The Roots of Repression." *Journal of Democracy* 32 No. 2 (April), 77-89.

We Dec 8 Tanzania Exam (no new readings)