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Government 157
Wesleyan University
Fall 2023

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

Class Meetings:
Tues. & Thurs., 10:20 - 11:40 AM
Exley Science Center 109

Democracy and Dictatorship: Politics in the Contemporary World

World events in the past several 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. To explore these issues this course uses the experiences of the United States, Sweden, Russia and the former Soviet Union, and Tanzania.

The course begins by exploring conceptual and normative issues related to democracy. It then reviews how democracy is being studied in contemporary political science, focusing on cognitive biases that affect political participation, democratization and autocratization, and cross-national comparisons of voter qualification and voter turnout.

The course then proceeds to four country studies, starting with the United States. The topics addressed in the US section are the social bases of support for Donald Trump, why Joe Biden won the 2020 election, how the Trump and Biden administrations responded to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the role of misinformation and disinformation in contemporary US politics.

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, study the autocratization of the Russian regime under Putin, and compare alternative explanations for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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 22 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

22 reading quizzes	One each class	18%
USA Paper	Oct 8 (Su)	18%
Sweden Exam	Oct 26 (Th)	18%
Russia Exam	Nov 16 (Th)	18%
Tanzania Exam	Dec 7 (Th)	18%
Class Participation		10%

Honor Code

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

Reading Quizzes

The quizzes are posted on the Moodle segment for each class session. They involve multiple-choice questions on each reading. Most of the class sessions have two readings, although several have one or three. The questions have four possible answers, only one of which is correct. Usually you will get two questions, but sometimes three or four, depending on how many readings were assigned and how many questions I thought up.

The quizzes are designed to highlight important issues in the reading and to introduce the method of multiple working hypotheses. The quizzes can be challenging, but are not intentionally tricky or funny. You are allowed, indeed encouraged, to see your questions *before* you do the reading. The quiz on each class session opens ten minutes after the previous class session ends. It must be completed by 9:30 AM on the day for which the reading is assigned.

Do not use artificial intelligence (ChatGPT etc.) at any point while taking the quiz -- whether to find out the answer, to double-check your answer, etc. In class from time to time, however, we'll watch Chat GPT answer quiz questions and see how it does vs. the class consensus. You are honor-bound not to ask artificial intelligence, your classmates, or anyone else for help on 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 are: you may not request assistance from anyone (e.g., your classmates) or anything (e.g., Chat-GPT) on the quiz questions you have been asked to answer, nor may you give assistance to anyone else on quiz questions that *they* have been asked to answer. The questions you will get on each reading are selected randomly from a larger pool of questions, so whomever you might ask for assistance is in any case unlikely to have gotten the same questions that you 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 Sunday, 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 improve US

democracy (or restore it, if you think it's below the threshold), either by deepening it or by making it more resilient to autocratization, and (4) defend the desirability and feasibility of the proposed change against counter-arguments that it would be undesirable, infeasible, or both. The paper must contain specific citations, with page numbers, to at least eight of the readings assigned for the class sessions from September 7 to October 5.

No outside reading need be done. The course readings and your general knowledge should suffice for you to complete the paper. If you've read this far in the syllabus, send me an email. The first student to email me gets extra course credit (unrelated to the paper). Your paper 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.

Examinations

You'll write out each exam by hand in a blue book during a single class period, without notes or electronic devices. The first exam takes place during the class period Thursday, October 26. It covers the October 10-19 class sessions and their assigned readings, mostly on Sweden. The second exam takes place during the class period Thursday, November 16. It will cover the October 31 to November 14 class sessions and their assigned readings, mostly on Russia and the former USSR. The third exam takes place during the class period Thursday, December 7. It will cover the November 21 to December 5 class sessions and their assigned readings, mostly on Tanzania. You may use ChatGPT (etc.) to prepare for the exams if you think it will help you, but (of course) not during the exam.

Artificial Intelligence

You may not use ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence platform ("AI") on the quizzes or on the three in-class handwritten exams. On the paper due October 8 you may use AI for insight but not in the writing. All students must include a statement indicating whether AI was used at any point in the assignment. If you didn't use AI, just write "I didn't use AI at any point in this assignment." If you did use AI for insight, describe how you used it.

Obtaining Course Readings

All readings are available on the Moodle; no books are required. Cardinal Print will produce a **Course Pack** of readings assigned for this course. There will be two volumes, the first covering Democracy in Comparative Politics and the USA, and the second Russia and Tanzania. The lead time on Course Packs is 12 days, so please download the first two week's readings from Moodle. The course pack will start with the Schedler and Diamond readings for Tuesday September 19.

When the course pack is ready, you may either view a digital file for free or order a printed copy for a charge. As of January 2022, up to 100 double-sided pages cost \$15.00, up to 150 cost \$22.00, up to 200 cost \$30.00, etc. No returns, refunds, or exchanges are permitted. To view a digital copy or purchase a printed copy, log into WesPortal and select Course Packs, which is listed under Courses. If you wish to purchase a printed copy, click Order Print. Your printed course packs will be delivered through Wes Station's package delivery system and billed to your student account. You will typically receive your course pack within three business days of placing your order. Course pack billing occurs toward the end of the semester. You will receive an email prior to billing so that you may review the charges.

Accessibility Services

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, room 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 contact Rabbi David Leipziger 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 participate fully 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.

TOPICS AND READINGS

Tu Sep 5 Introduction to the Course

No assigned reading

1. Democracy: Initial Considerations

1.1. Conceptual and Normative Issues

Th Sep 7 Conceptualizing and Justifying Democracy

1. Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Chapter 4 (35-43), Chapter 8 (83-99).
2. Sen, Amartya (1999). "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10 No. 3 (July), 3-17.

Tu Sep 12 Measuring Democracy

1. 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

Th Sep 14 Democracy, Political Knowledge, and Political Decision-Making

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

Tu Sep 19 Democratization and Autocratization

1. Schedler, Andreas (1998). "What is Democratic Consolidation?" *Journal of Democracy* 9 No. 2 (April), 91-107.
2. Diamond, Larry (2021). "Democratic Regression in Comparative Perspective: Scope, Methods, and Causes." *Democratization* 28 No. 1, 22-42.

1.3. Electoral Rights and Electoral Behavior

Th Sep 21 Who Has the Right to Vote?

1. 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).
2. 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).

Tu Sep 26 Who Actually Does Vote?

1. DeSilver, Drew (2022). "Turnout in U.S. has Soared in Recent Elections but by Some Measures Still Trails That of Many Other Countries." Pew Research Center, November 1, pp. 1-8.
2. 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).
3. 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.

2. Democracy: Country Studies

2.1. The United States

Th Sep 28 The Trump Presidency and Its Aftermath

1. Sides, John, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck (2022). *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 8 and 9, 214-267.

Tu Oct 3 The Social Basis of Support for Donald Trump

1. Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart (2019). *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10, 331-367.

Th Oct 5 Pandemic Politics and Prebunking

1. Gadarian, Shana Kushner, Sara Wallace Goodman, and Thomas B. Pepinsky (2022). "Shots in Arms: The Partisan Politics of Vaccination." Chapter 10 in Gadarian, Goodman, and Pepinsky, *Pandemic Politics: The Deadly Toll of Partisanship in the Age of COVID*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 253-287.
2. van der Linden, Sander (2023). *Foolproof: Why Misinformation Infects our Minds and How to Build Immunity*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1-9, 169-194.
3. Santharam, Laura (2021). "How 'Prebunking' Can Fight Fast-moving Vaccine Lies." PBS Newshour (June 11), 1-4.

Su Oct 8 Improving democracy in the USA paper due at 5 PM

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

2.2. Sweden

- Tu Oct 10 Political Institutions and Political Parties in Sweden
1. Lijphart, Arend (1991). "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 2 No. 1 (Winter), 72-84.
 2. 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).
- Th Oct 12 Why is There Social Democracy in Sweden, But Not in the United States?
1. Lipset, Seymour Martin (1983). "Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working Class Politics." *American Political Science Review* 77 No. 1 (March), 1-18.
 2. Archer, Robin (2007). "Labour Politics in the New World: Werner Sombart and the United States." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 49 No. 4, 459-482.
- Tu Oct 17 The Welfare State in Sweden and the United States
1. 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.
 2. 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).
- Th Oct 19 Sweden: Rise of the Right
1. 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.
 2. Berman, Sheri (2021). "The Causes of Populism in the West." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24, 71-88.
- Th Oct 26 **Sweden Exam (no new readings)**

2.3. Russia and the former Soviet Union

- Tu Oct 31 Marxism and Leninism
1. Marx, Karl (1848). "The Communist Manifesto." In David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx: Selected Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 221-247.
 2. 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.
- Th Nov 2 The Russian Revolution and Its Aftermath
1. Chamberlin, William Henry (1935/1965). *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921*, Vol. 1. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1-17.
 2. DeBardleben, 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.
- Tu Nov 7 Stalinism and the Collapse of Communism
1. "Z" [Martin Malia] (1990). "To the Stalin Mausoleum." *Daedalus* 119 No. 1 (Winter), 295-340.
- Th Nov 9 Russia: Politics Since 1990
1. McFaul, Michael (2018). "Choosing Autocracy: Actors, Institutions, and Revolution in the Erosion of Russian Democracy." *Comparative Politics* 50 No. 3 (April), 305-325.
 2. Frye, Timothy (2021). *Weak Strongman: The Limits of Power in Putin's Russia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Chapters 2 and 3, 15-49.
- Tu Nov 14 Why Did Russia Invade Ukraine?
1. Mearsheimer, John J. (2022). "The Causes and Consequences of the Ukraine War." Transcribed lecture at the European University Institute, June 16. 19 pp. Accessed June 24, 2023, at <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/causes-and-consequences-ukraine-war>
 2. Cirincione, Joe (2022). "What's Missing from Mearsheimer's Analysis of the Ukraine War." 9 pp. Accessed June 24, 2023, at <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/whats-missing-mearsheimers-analysis-ukraine-war>
 3. Person, Robert, and Michael McFaul (2022). "What Putin Fears Most." *Journal of Democracy* 33 No. 2 (April), 18-27.
- Th Nov 16 **Russia/USSR Exam (no new readings)**

2.4. Tanzania

- Tu Nov 21 Political Authority in Pre-Colonial Tanganyika
1. Iliffe, John (1979). "Tanganyika in 1800." In Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (6-25).
 2. 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).
- Tu Nov 28 The Depoliticization of Ethnicity in Mainland Tanzania
1. Malipula, Mrisho (2014). "Depoliticised Ethnicity in Tanzania: A Structural and Historical Narrative." *Afrika Focus* 27 No. 2, 49-70.
- Th Nov 30 Democracy and the One-Party State in Tanzania
1. Nyerere, Julius (1966). *Freedom and Unity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 103-106, 195-203.
 2. 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.
 3. Humana, Charles (1992). *World Human Rights Guide*. London: Hutchinson, 3-10, 306-309 (Sweden), 314-318 (Tanzania), 350-353 (USA).
- Tu Dec 5 Tanzania: Politics and Pandemic Response
1. Paget, Dan (2021). "Tanzania: The Authoritarian Landslide." *Journal of Democracy* 32 No. 2 (April), 61-76.
 2. Cheeseman, Nic, Hilary Matfess, and Alitalali Amani (2021). "Tanzania: The Roots of Repression." *Journal of Democracy* 32 No. 2 (April), 77-89.
- Th Dec 7 **Tanzania Exam (no new readings)**