In the past quarter century over three dozen regimes have become new democracies. These transformations have sparked a number of debates between political theorists, citizens and even politicians: Does the spread of democracy serve the interests of the citizens in these new polities? Does the spread of democracy promote economic growth and modernity? Does the spread of democracy promise the end of war? While many observers have answered in the affirmative to all these questions, some new democracies have already failed and slid back towards authoritarianism. This observation forces us to ask a prior question: What is necessary for democracy to succeed? Specifically, what are the conditions that lead to stable democratic governance?

Government 203 is an introduction to the study of politics within countries. This semester we will examine the sources of stable democracy. We will begin with the question—why are some countries stable democracies and others not? Along the way to answering this question, this course has three heuristic objectives: First, to survey three major conceptual approaches to comparative politics and political science: Political Economy, Political Sociology, and the New Institutionalism. Second, to introduce basic facts about eight contemporary political systems. Third, to illustrate ways in which social scientists design research in order to answer questions like “why are some countries stable democracies and others not?” This is an introductory course; it assumes no previous study of politics.

Outline of the Course

I. THE PROBLEM: WHY AREN’T ALL COUNTRIES DEMOCRATIC?
   A. Does Democracy Matter?
   B. What in the World is Democracy?

II. POLITICAL ECONOMY: IS DEMOCRACY BOURGEOIS? (Great Britain and Argentina)
   A. Did Capitalists Build British Democracy?
   B. British Democracy Today.
   C. Argentina’s Historic Exceptionalism and Current Crisis
   D. Political Economy—An Overview.

III. POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY: IS DEMOCRACY WHAT YOU THINK? (Japan and Italy)
   A. How Can Democracy Possibly Survive in Japanese Culture?
   C. Is Democracy Compatable with Islamic Culture?
   D. Political Sociology and Culture—An Overview.

IV. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALISM: IS DEMOCRACY BY DESIGN? (Germany and Nigeria)
   A. Did the Weimar Constitution Bring Down German Democracy?
   B. German Democracy Today.
   E. Confronting Institutionalism—Alternative Explanations for Weimar’s Failure.
   F. Nigeria: Could Madison, Hamilton and Jefferson Have Done Any Better?
V. **BRINGING THE PIECES TOGETHER: THE FUTURE OF NEW DEMOCRACIES** (Russia and NIS)
   A. Can Democracy Survive in Post-Communist Societies?
   B. Russian Democracy Today.
   C. Bringing the Pieces Together—Predicting the Future of the New Democracies.
**Reading Assignments:** Two Course Packets are available at Staples Office Supply store. Additional reading materials may be assigned and provided to you online.

**Grades:** Your course grade will be the weighted average of your performance in class discussions/projects and on two examinations. In the computation of your course grade, your performance on these requirements will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examinations:** Each examination will include two parts—short identification questions and one or more essays. The dates of the examinations are as follows:

- **Midterm Examination:** Friday, March 1st
- **Final Examination:** April 29th or May 2nd (Your Choice)

One essay question for each examination will be a take-home assignment to be turned in at the time of the examination. You will receive the take home essay question at least 1 week before the examination.

**Class Participation:** Participation during class meetings is a required part of the course. You will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading. Discussion provides an opportunity to critically question the ideas presented in the readings and the lecture and, more importantly, it offers students the chance to share their own ideas. This active involvement of students in their own education enables learning in a way that straight lecture does not. In addition to relatively unstructured class discussions, there will be two group exercises done during class time. (These are detailed below.)
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

I. THE PROBLEM: WHY AREN'T ALL COUNTRIES DEMOCRATIC?

- How and Why Should We Compare Political Systems?
- Does Democracy Matter?
- What in the World is Democracy?

Reading Assignment:
Shively. *Why and How Should We Compare?*
Shively. *The Setting of Power: The State*


II. POLITICAL ECONOMY: IS DEMOCRACY BOURGEOIS?

- Did Capitalists Build British Democracy? Why Not Argentina?

Reading Assignment:

- British Democracy Today.

Reading Assignment:
Shively. *Politics in Britain*.

Studlar, “A Constitutional Revolution in Britain?”

- Political Economy—An Overview.

Reading Assignment:


Shively. *The State and the Economy*

III. POLITICAL CULTURE: IS DEMOCRACY WHAT YOU THINK?
- An Overview of Sociological Approaches to Politics.

**Reading Assignment:**


Samuel Huntington. *The Third Wave* (Chpt. 6 excerpt on various cultures)

Samuel Huntington. “Foreword to *Culture Matters*”


- Is Democracy Compatible With Confucian Culture? What About Islamic Culture?


**In-Class Assignment I: Debate → Is Culture Really Destiny?**

- How Can Democracy Possibly Survive in Japanese Culture?

**Reading Assignment:**


- How Does Culture Influence the Operation of Democracy?

**Reading Assignment:**


IV. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALISM: DEMOCRACY BY DESIGN?

- Did the Weimar Constitution Bring Down German Democracy?
  
  Reading Assignment:


- The Limits of Institutional Design: The Case of Nigeria

  Mundt and Aborisade, “Politics in Nigeria” (focus on history and political institutions)

- German Democracy Today.

  Reading Assignment:


- Political Institutionalism: An Overview

  Reading Assignment:


In-Class Assignment II: A Simulation in Constitutional Design

V. BRINGING THE PIECES TOGETHER: THE FUTURE OF NEW DEMOCRACIES

- Can Democracy Survive in Post-Communist Societies?
- Russian Democracy Today.

  Reading Assignment:


- Bringing the Pieces Together—Predicting the Future of Post-Communist States.

VI. WHAT IS COMPARATIVE POLITICS REALLY ALL ABOUT?

- What Other Questions Does Comparative Politics Ask?  (Overview of the Field)
  
  **Reading Assignment:**


  **Final Examination:** April 29th or May 2nd at 8:30 am (You can take it at either time)