

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

Government 203
Introduction to Comparative Politics
2002

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Spring Semester,

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?
 - B. Japanese Democracy Today.
 - C. Is Democracy Compatible 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.
 - C. The New Institutionalism—An Overview.
 - 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:

Class Participation	20%
Midterm examination	40%
Final examination	40%

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 29 th or May 2 nd (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*

Robert Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Chapters 1-2. (Chapter 3 is optional, but the most interesting).

II. POLITICAL ECONOMY: IS DEMOCRACY BOURGEOIS?

- **Did Capitalists Build British Democracy? Why Not Argentina?**

Reading Assignment:

Barrington Moore, Jr. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966. Chapters 1, 7.

- **British Democracy Today.**

Reading Assignment:

Shively. *Politics in Britain*.

Studlar, "A Constitutional Revolution in Britain?"

- **Political Economy—An Overview.**

Reading Assignment:

Robert Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Chapters 4-6.

Gabriel Almond, "Capitalism and Democracy" *PS*, 1991.

Shively. *The State and the Economy*

III. POLITICAL CULTURE: IS DEMOCRACY WHAT YOU THINK?

- An Overview of Sociological Approaches to Politics.

Reading Assignment:

The Economist, "The Man in the Baghdad Café," November 1996.

Robert Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Chapter 7.

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

Samuel Huntington. "Foreword to *Culture Matters*"

Ronald Inglehart, "Culture and Democracy," in *Culture Matters*, 2000.

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

Fareed Zakaria. "Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kwan Yew." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1994.

Kim Dae Jung. "Is Culture Destiny: the Myth of Asia's Anti-Democratic Values." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1994.

Ray Takeyh, "Faith-Based Initiatives: Can Islam Bring Democracy to the Middle East?" *Foreign Policy*, December 2001.

Gabriel Warburg, "Islam and Democracy Book Review" *Middle Eastern Studies*, July 1999.

Mahmood Monshipouri, "Islam, Democracy and the Sudan" *The Review of Politics*, Winter 1997.

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

- How Can Democracy Possibly Survive in Japanese Culture?

Reading Assignment:

Scott C. Flanagan. "The Genesis of Variant Political Cultures: Contemporary Citizen Orientations in Japan, America, Britain, and Italy." In Sidney Verba and Lucian W. Pye, eds. *The Citizen and Politics: A Comparative Perspective*. Stamford: Greylock, 1978.

- How Does Culture Influence the Operation of Democracy?

Reading Assignment:

Robert D. Putnam. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Chapters 1, 4.

David Kirp, "Tocqueville in Italy," *The Nation*, November 1993.

Robert D. Putnam. "Bowling Alone: Democracy in America at the End of the Twentieth Century." Nobel Symposium, 27-30 August 1994.

MID-TERM EXAMINATION: Friday March 1st

IV. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALISM: DEMOCRACY BY DESIGN?

- Did the Weimar Constitution Bring Down German Democracy?

Reading Assignment:

M. Rainer Lepsius. "From Fragmented Party Democracy to Government by Emergency Decree and National Socialist Takeover: Germany." In Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978.

- 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:

Shively. "Germany." In W. Phillips Shively, ed. *Comparative Governance*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

- Political Institutionalism: An Overview

Reading Assignment:

Juan J. Linz. "The Perils of Presidentialism," *Journal of Democracy* 1 (Winter 1990), 51-69.

Donald L. Horowitz, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Juan J. Linz. "Debate: Presidents vs. Parliaments," *Journal of Democracy* 1 (Fall 1990), 73-91.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. "Leave the Constitution Alone." In Donald L. Robinson, ed. *Reforming American Government*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985. (excerpt)

G. Bingham Powell. *Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability, and Violence*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982. Chapter 4. (excerpt)

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:

Philip G. Roeder. "Russia." In W. Phillips Shively, ed. *Comparative Governance*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

Stephen F. Cohen. "A Transition Leading to Tragedy." *The Los Angeles Times*. Dec. 13, 1996.

David Remnick. "Can Russia Change?" *Foreign Affairs*. Jan/Feb, 1997.

- **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:

Robert Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Chapters 9-11 and appendices.

Samuel P. Huntington. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. Chapters 1, 6.

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