

17.500: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Building 1, Room 134

Instructors

Professor Chappell Lawson, Political Science
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Why you should take this class

This class will teach you about politics around the world, focusing on subjects like democracy and the political roots of economic development. If you are interested in political science as a concentration, this class will prepare you for more advanced subjects. If you just want to understand what is going on in the world, this class will provide you with a useful theoretical framework, as well as background on some of the most important countries in the world.

What this class is about

Why are some countries democratic and others not? How do political institutions affect economic development and political conflict? How do politics in the United States compare to politics in other countries? This class first reviews cultural, social, and institutional explanations for political outcomes. It then turns to more detailed examination of specific topics: ethnic conflict in India, democratic collapse in Weimar Germany, regional disparities in Italy, market-oriented reform (or lack thereof) in Brazil, corruption in Mexico, ethnic violence in Yugoslavia, the impoverishment of post-Communist Russia, and the prospects for democracy in China. Each of these examples is meant to stand in for a range of cases, allowing you to extrapolate to new material. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze political events around the world, drawing on the theoretical explanations provided in the class.

Readings

Readings total approximately 85 pages per week and should take you about three hours, depending on how fast you read. The only book required for the class is Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. All other readings can be found in your course reader. Both the reader and Putnam's book will be available on reserve in Dewey Library (Building E53, first floor).

Requirements

Class participation

You are expected to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. As a rule of thumb, you should plan to spend about an hour or two going over your notes from the readings and preparing for class each week after you have completed the readings. Please notify the instructor at the beginning of the class if, for whatever reason, you are unprepared to participate in class discussion that day. Also, if you must miss a class, please notify the instructors in advance. More than two unexcused absences or “unprepareds” will jeopardize your class participation grade.

Class presentation

You will be expected to make a brief (around 10 minute) presentation in class over the course of the semester. Your presentation should summarize and critique the readings for that week in a polished way. You may choose any week other than Week 1 (an introductory week) or Week 6 (the week of the midterm).

Papers

You will be expected to write two three-page papers in the course of the semester. The first, due by September 22, addresses ethnic cleavages in India. The second, due November 21, requires you to summarize and critique institutional, cultural, and social-structural explanations of political outcomes. Papers are due by 4 p.m. to the faculty mailboxes of either Professor Rodden or Professor Lawson, located on the fourth floor of E53.

Examinations

This course includes an in-class midterm exam (October 12) and a five-page take-home final. The midterm will test basic knowledge of the readings and lectures from the first half of the course. The final requires you to apply the theoretical frameworks you have learned over the semester to a specific event not previously covered in class. The exact topic for the final will be announced at the end of the semester.

Grading

Class participation will count 15% of your grade; the class presentation will count 10%; each paper will count 15%; the midterm will count 20%; and the take-home final will count 25%. Each batch of papers or examinations will be graded entirely by one professor. If you are dissatisfied with your grade, you may appeal it to the other professor. In that case, you will receive the average of the two grades, regardless of whether that is higher or lower than your original grade.

Overall workload

Combining the readings, written work, preparation for examinations, and actual time in class, you should plan to devote approximately nine hours per week to the subject.

Week 1. Introduction

- SEPTEMBER 5: INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW OF THE SYLLABUS
SEPTEMBER 7: DEBATE: WHY IS RUSSIA SUCH A MESS? (RODDEN AND LAWSON)

READINGS

Newspaper articles on Russia.

Week 2. Political cleavages

- SEPTEMBER 12: CUMULATIVE AND CROSS-CUTTING CLEAVAGES: CLASS, SECTOR, REGION, RACE, ETHNICITY, RELIGION, GENDER, ETC. (LAWSON)
SEPTEMBER 14: ETHNIC CLEAVAGES, POLITICAL CONFLICT, AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (RODDEN)

READINGS

James Madison, Federalist No. 10, in Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Federalist Papers* (London: Penguin Books, 1987 [1788]): 122-28.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: Part I, in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978): 473-83.

Max Weber, "Class, Status, and Party," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958): 180-186.

Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 105-121.

William Easterly and Ross Levine, "Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November 1997: 1203-1250.

Week 3. Political institutions

- SEPTEMBER 19: HOW DO INSTITUTIONS ACCENTUATE OR MODERATE POLITICAL CLEAVAGES? (RODDEN)
SEPTEMBER 21: INSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS IN INDIA (RODDEN)

READINGS

Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 121-23.

Ashotosh Varshney, "Why Democracy Survives," *Journal of Democracy* 9: 3 (July 1998), p. 36-50.

Arend Lijphart, "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation," *American Political Science Review* 90: 2 (June 1996), p. 258-268.

Alfred Stepan, "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model," *Journal of Democracy* 10: 4 (October 1999), p. 19-33.

James Manor, "Making Federalism Work," *Journal of Democracy* 9: 3 (July 1998), p. 21-35.

Douglas Verney, "Parliamentary Government and Presidential Government," in Arend Lijphart, ed., *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 31-47.

Vasant Sathe, "For a Directly Elected President of India," in Arend Lijphart, ed., *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 187-190.

"A Cacophony of States," *The Economist*, October 16, 1999.

[Note: Paper #1 due by 4:00 PM on Friday, September 22]

Week 4. Cultural explanations for economic outcomes

SEPTEMBER 26: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CULTURE? (LAWSON)

SEPTEMBER 28: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LAWSON)

READINGS

Thomas Sowell, *Migrations and Cultures: A World View* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), p. 1-19, 101-104, 227-233, 306-308, 367-388.

Stephen Knack and Philip Keefer, "Does Social Capital Have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (November 1997), p. 1251-1288

Week 5. Cultural explanations for political outcomes

OCTOBER 3: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DEMOCRACY (LAWSON)

OCTOBER 5: CRITIQUES OF CULTURAL ARGUMENTS (LAWSON)

READINGS

Nicolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Book 1, Chapters 16-17, in Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa, eds., *The Portable Machiavelli* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979 [1531]): 218-224.

Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, TBA

Week 6. Midterm Examination

October 12: Midterm examination

Week 7. Political influences on economic growth

OCTOBER 24: FACTOR ENDOWMENTS, CULTURE, OR POLITICS? (RODDEN)

OCTOBER 26: INSTITUTIONS AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE (RODDEN)

READINGS

Mancur Olson, "Big Bills Left on the Sidewalk: Why Some Nations are Rich, and Others Poor," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 10, 2 (1996): 3-24.

Weingast, Barry, "The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market-Preserving Federalism and Economic Development," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 11: 1 (1995).

Adam Przeworski and Fenando Limongi, "Political Regimes and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, 3 (1993): 51-69.

Pranab Bardhan, "Symposium on Democracy and Development," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, 3 (1993), read pages 45-47.

Week 8. Why can't Brazil reform?

OCTOBER 31: STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND ITS (THEORETICAL) BENEFITS (LAWSON)

NOVEMBER 2: "THE COUNTRY OF THE FUTURE AND ALWAYS WILL BE" (RODDEN)

READINGS

John Waterbury, "The Heart of the Matter? Public Enterprise and the Adjustment Process," in Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, eds., *The Politics of Economic Adjustment: International Constraints, Distributive Conflicts, and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, c1992): 270-315.

Juarez Brandão Lopes, "Obstacles to Economic Reform in Brazil," in Arend Lijphart and Carlos H. Waisman, eds., *Institutional Design in New Democracies: Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), p. 195-218.

Scott Mainwaring, "Brazilian Party Underdevelopment in Comparative Perspective," *Political Science Quarterly* 107 (Winter 1992-1993), p. 677-707.

Barry Ames. 1995. "Electoral Rules, Constituency Pressures, and Pork Barrel: Bases of Voting in the Brazilian Congress," *Journal of Politics* 57(2): 324-43.

The Economist, "Country Survey of Brazil," March 27-April 2, 1999.

- "The Devaluing of a Presidency," p. 3-5.
- "Democracy's Difficulties," p. 7-9.
- "A Sorry State," p. 9-12.

- “A Federation in Dispute,” p. 13-18.

Week 9. Why is Mexico so corrupt?

- NOVEMBER 7: LA MORDIDA IN MEXICO: FROM “OBEDEZCO PERO NO CUMPLO” TO TRAFFIC TICKETS, SOCCER LEAGUES, THE MEDIA, THE CHURCH, POLLSTERS, AND “EL POLÍTICO POBRE” (LAWSON)
- NOVEMBER 9: SOCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS FOR CORRUPTION (LAWSON AND RODDEN)

READINGS

Andres Oppenheimer, *Bordering on Chaos* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1996):289-94.

Stephen D. Morris, “Corruption and the Mexican Political System: Continuity and Change,” *Third World Quarterly*, 1999, 20 (3):623-43.

Hernando de Soto, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 131-55.

Daniel Treisman, “The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-National Study,” *Journal of Public Economics* (forthcoming).

Week 10. Why did democracy collapse in Weimar Germany?

- OCTOBER 17: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC (RODDEN)
- OCTOBER 19: CLASS DEBATE: WHY HITLER?

READINGS

Seymour Martin Lipset, “‘Fascism’ – Left, Right, and Center,” in *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981): 127-152.

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: Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 34-79.

Henry Ashby Turner, *Hitler’s Thirty Days to Power: January 1933* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1996): 1-2, 163-183.

A J. P. Taylor, “History Unfolds, 1918-1933,” in John L. Snell, ed., *The Nazi Revolution: Germany’s Guilt or Germany’s Fate?* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company): 19-26.

Week 11. Why do people suddenly start killing each other?

- NOVEMBER 14: THE RISE OF NATIONALISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE (RODDEN)

NOVEMBER 16: WHY DO COUNTRIES BREAK UP? (RODDEN)

READINGS

Daniel Treisman, "Russia's Ethnic Revival: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order," *World Politics* 49 (January 1997), p. 212-49.

Ivo Banac, "The Fearful Asymmetry of War: The Causes and Consequences of Yugoslavia's Demise," *Daedalus* 121: 2 (Spring 1992), p. 141-173.

Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson, "Who were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," *American Sociological Review* 59 (February 1994), p. 83-97.

Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spolaore, "On the Number and Size of Nations," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112:4 (November 1997), p 1027-56.

Week 12. Class discussion

NOVEMBER 21: HAND IN PAPERS, PRESENT AND DEFEND ARGUMENTS

Week 13. Will China become a democracy?

NOVEMBER 28: CHINA AND TAIWAN COMPARED (LAWSON)

NOVEMBER 30: CLASS DEBATE: THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

READINGS

Minxin Pei, "'Creeping Democratization' in China," in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yuh-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 213-27.

Andrew J. Nathan, "China's Constitutionalist Option," in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yuh-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 228-249.

David S. G. Goodman, "Can China Change?" in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yuh-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 250-56.

Ying-shi Yü, "China's New Wave of Nationalism," in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yuh-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 257-64.

Journal of Democracy, January 1998, 9 (1): 3-64. Contributions by Brzezinski, Chen, Harding, Matzger, Oksenberg, Scalapino, Waldron, Wang, Zhao, and Nathan.

Week 14. Russia's colossal mess, revisited

DECEMBER 5: CLASS DISCUSSION: WHAT WENT WRONG IN RUSSIA? (RODDEN AND LAWSON)

DECEMBER 7: CLASS DISCUSSION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON RUSSIA (RODDEN AND LAWSON)

READINGS

Grigory Yavlinsky, "Russia's Phony Capitalism," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1998.

Peter Ordeshook, "Institutions and Incentives," *Journal of Democracy* 6, 2 (April 1995), p. 46-60.

Contributions to *Journal of Democracy* 10, 2 (April 1999): "What Went Wrong in Russia?"

- Michael McFaul, "The Perils of a Protracted Transition," p. 4-18.
- Dmitri Glinski and Peter Reddaway, "The Ravages of Market Bolshevism," p. 19-34.
- Alexander Lukin, "Forcing the Pace of Democratization," 35-40.
- Martin Malia, "The Haunting Presence of Marxism-Leninism," p. 41-46.
- Anders Aslund, "The Problem of Fiscal Federalism," p. 83-86.
- James Millar, "Creating Perverse Incentives," p. 87-40.

Newspaper articles on Russia

Week 15. Review of course themes

DECEMBER 12: CONCLUDING LECTURE (LAWSON AND RODDEN)

READINGS

None