

SOCSC-UH 1112: Introduction to Political Thinking

Lecture: Asynchronous Remote Recordings

Synchronous Remote Discussion Class: Wednesdays

Section 1: 2:00-2:45 pm (GST)

Section 2: 2:55-3:40 pm (GST)

Section 3: 3:55-4:40 pm (GST)

Section 4: 4:42-5:27 pm (GST)

New York University Abu Dhabi
Fall 2020

Duration of Course: 13 Weeks

Course Credits: 4

Prerequisites: None

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers students an introduction to some of the main questions that have long engaged political scientists. Why do we organize into nation states? What are the different ways to run a country? How are the preferences of the public turned into policies? Why do conflicts arise? And, why are peaceful settlements so often difficult to achieve? Should countries intervene into other country's domestic politics? What are the challenges to state building? Are great powers likely to make war against one another soon? This course offers students an introduction to the theories and frameworks that political scientists use to approach these, among other questions. The course relies on cases and examples, and incorporates readings from contemporary academic and journalistic sources to illustrate how these approaches can shed light on many of the most vexing questions in our discipline.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The goal of this course is to introduce students to some of the fundamental questions in political science and the theories that are essential for *political thinking*. The focus of this course will neither be historical nor descriptive. The course is also NOT mathematical, and students will not be required to perform complicated math problems. Rather, the course will focus on the theories and analytical frameworks that help us understand political phenomena.

COURSE FORMAT

The primary theories and conceptual frameworks will be introduced during lecture. The lectures will be recorded and be made available for students to view at their leisure. Readings will be assigned for most lectures, and the subject of the readings will be used to illustrate these concepts and discussed in class. You are expected to do the readings prior to watching the recorded lectures. On Wednesdays, a synchronous remote class will

be held in which we will discuss assigned readings (where key concepts and readings will be explored in greater depth). There are two tests: Exam 1 covers the material before the Fall Break, and Exam II covers (most of) the material thereafter.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be graded on the basis of the following weighted combination:

In-class discussion – Attendance & Participation	20%
Response Papers (x3)	30%
Exam I	25%
Exam II	25%

Attendance & Participation: There will be a grade attached to the in-class discussion as assigned by the professor. The grade will reflect your *preparation for and participation in* zoom discussion groups. Preparation for discussion groups involves watching recorded lectures and completing the assigned readings for each class. Participation refers to your active engagement with the material being introduced and discussing the material and assigned readings in class. You will be allowed to miss one in-class discussion unexcused. For any additional classes missed result in a penalty to this grade. *You can reduce the penalty by providing a short summary of each paper that is assigned that day.*

Response Papers: Each student will need to complete three response papers, each of which corresponds to a particular set of readings. Each response paper should be approximately 2 (double-spaced) pages, and should provide *a brief critical analysis of the reading(s) (i.e., NOT a summary)*. The paper is due on Tuesday – by 23:59 / 11:59 pm (GST) - on the day before the reading will be discussed in class. Readings in the course outline (below) that are starred (*) are eligible (i.e., response papers about non-starred papers will not be accepted). One response paper is due from the eligible readings from Section I-IV of the course outline. The 2nd paper is due from the eligible readings from Section V-VIII of the course outline. The 3rd paper is due from the eligible readings from Section IX of the course outline.

The due dates and eligible readings for each possible response paper, along with the criteria for completing these papers, are posted on NYU classes in the Response Paper Guidelines document.

Exams: The course will be split into two sections, each of which will be covered in Exam I and Exam II, respectively. The final will not be (explicitly) cumulative. Extensive study materials will be provided prior to each exam.

GRADING SCALE – No Exceptions

100-93%: A	86.9-83%: B	76.9-73%: C	66.9-60%: D
92.9-90%: A-	82.9-80%: B-	72.9-70%: C-	<59.9%: F
89.9-87%: B+	79.9-77%: C+	69.9-67%: D+	

COURSE OUTLINE (All Readings are posted on NYU Classes)

I. Why States?

Monday, September 7th - RECORDED LECTURE

Why Do We Organize at All? Anarchy, Order and Cooperation

- Braegger, B. 2013. "Bedouin System of Justice"
- Leeson, Peter. 2007. "Anarchy Unbound, or: Why Self-Enforcing Governance Works Better than You Think" *Cato Unbound*
- Rodrik, Dani. 2007. "Response to Leeson: The Limits of Self-Enforcing Agreements" *Cato Unbound*
- "How Countries Like the Philippines Fall into Vigilante Violence". 2016. *New York Times*
- "African Governments are Trying to Collect More Tax," 2020. *The Economist*.

Wednesday, September 9th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Authority, the Social Contract and State Formation

- Skarbek, David. 2014. *The Social Order of the Underworld: How Prison Gangs Govern American Prisons*. Oxford University Press. (Selections)
- "Losing Faith in the State, Some Mexican Towns are Quietly Break Away." 2018. *New York Times*
- "Why are Niger and Mali's Cattle Herders Turning to Jihad?" 2017. *Wire*
- Farrell, Henry. 2015. "Dark Leviathan: The Reluctant King of the Internet." *Aeon Magazine*

II. Why are States Organized So Differently from One Another? Regime Types: Democracy Vs. Authoritarianism

Monday, September 14th - RECORDED LECTURE

What is Democracy?

- Dahl, Robert. 2005. "What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *Political Science Quarterly* 120(2): 187-197.
- Svobik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarianism*, chapter 1.
- "Xi Jinping May Delay Picking China's Next Leader, Stoking Speculation", *New York Times*, Oct. 2016.
- "Norms Matter". Brendan Nyhan. *Politico*. September 2017.

Wednesday, September 16th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Regime Type discussion and implications (from previous week)

- *Mounk, Yascha and Roberto Stefan Foa. 2018. "The End of the Democratic Century" *Foreign Affairs*. May/June 29-36
- *Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2020. "Paths to Power: The Rise and Fall of Dictators," *Foreign Affairs*. January/February

III. Democratic Institutions I: Types of Voting Methods, Electoral Systems and Governments

Monday, September 21st - RECORDED LECTURE

The Basics of Group Choice and Voting Methods

- “How Putin Played the Far Left”, *The Daily Beast*, Jan. 2017
- “Could a third-party candidate win the U.S. Presidency? That’s very unlikely.” *The Washington Post - Monkey Cage*. August 2016

Wednesday, September 23rd - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Discussion of Voting Methods

- No readings

Monday, September 28th - RECORDED LECTURE

Turning Votes into Power: Electoral Systems

- “PR Thresholds – Too Many Parties can spoil politics”. *The Economist*. 2016

Wednesday, September 30th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Electoral Systems (con’t)

- *Rodden, Jonathan. 2019. *Why Cities Lose*. Basic Books. p. 1-38
- *Wong, Stan Hok-Wui. 2019. “Gerrymandering in Electoral Autocracies: Evidence from Hong Kong,” *British Journal of Political Science* 49(2)

IV. Democratic Institutions II: Elections and Representation

Monday, October 5th - RECORDED LECTURE

Are Elections Enough to Ensure Representation? & The Role of Political Parties in Representation

- Achen and Bartels. 2015. *Democracy for Realists*, chapter 1.
- Levy, Jacob. 2017. “The Party Declines – Republican Party Failure.”
- Levitsky, S. and D. Ziblatt. *How Democracies Die*. 2018. chapter 2

Wednesday, October 7th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Discussion of Political Parties and Representation

- *Corstange, Daniel. 2016. *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East: Clientelism and Communal Politics in Lebanon and Yemen*, chpt. 5.
- “The Lottocracy”. 2014. Alexander Guerrero. *Aeon Magazine*.

Monday, October 12th – SYNCHRONOUS EXAM REVIEW

- RECORDED REVIEW + OPEN OFFICE HOURS

EXAM I: Wednesday, October 14th

Sunday, October 18th (Legislative Day – Wed. schedule)– RETURN EXAMS

NO CLASS —W, October 21st

V. Why are large-scale social movements so rare? Why do they happen at all?

Monday, October 26th

Collective Action & Large-Scale Social Movements

- Sidney Tarrow. 1994. *Power in Movement*, pp. 1-27.
- “African Nations Increasingly Silence Internet to Stem Protest”, *NY Times*.
- “Eight years after Egypt’s revolution, here’s what we’ve learned about social media and protest,” *The Washington Post*. 2019.

Wednesday, October 28th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Large-Scale Social Movements – The Arab Spring

- *King G., J. Pan and M. Roberts. 2017. “How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument” *American Political Science Review*
- “The Secret Rally that Sparked an Uprising,” *Wall St. Journal*. 2011.

VI. Why do we have violent conflict?

Monday, November 2nd - RECORDED LECTURE

Causes of Conflict & Identity, Cleavages and Conflict

- “Assad Has Won in Syria. But Syria Hardly Exists.” 2017
- Posner, Daniel. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi”
- “The Real Roots of the Sunni-Shia Conflict: Beyond the Myths of ‘Ancient Religious Hatreds’”. *Vox.com*. Jan., 2016.

Wednesday, November 4th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Fostering Social Capital and State Building

- *Miguel. E. 2004. “Tribe or Nation? Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya vs. Tanzania” *World Politics* 56(3): 328-362.
- Habyarimana et al. 2008. “Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable?” *Foreign Affairs*.

VII. How does Politics Affect Economic Development?

Monday November 9th - RECORDED LECTURE

Institutions and Politics (theoretical relationship)

- North, Douglass. 1991. Institutions. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5(1): 97-112
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and George Downs. 2005. "Democracy and Development." *Foreign Affairs* 84(5): 78.

Wednesday, November 11th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Discussion of Institutions and Development

- “China Rules: They Didn’t Like the West’s playbook. So they wrote their own.” *New York Times*. November 18, 2018
- *Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2011. *Why Nations Fail*. Selections

VIII. What is the Role of the State in International Politics?

Monday November 16th - RECORDED LECTURE

International Security Architecture

- Mearsheimer, John. 2019. “Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order.” *International Security*. 43(4): 7-50.

Wednesday, November 18th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Will Great Powers Make War Against Each Other Again?

- *Mearsheimer, John. 2014. “Can China Rise Peacefully?” *National Interest* 25: 23-37
- *Gartzke, Erik. 2007. “The Capitalist Peace.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 166-191.
- *Lake, David. 2011. “Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War.” *International Security* 35(3): 7-52.

Monday November 23rd - RECORDED LECTURE

International Economic Architecture

- Frieden, Jeffrey, David Lake, and J. Lawrence Broz, eds. 2017. *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth*. Sixth edition. W.W. Norton, *selections*

Wednesday, November 25th - SYNCHRONOUS EXAM II REVEIW

EXAM II: Monday, November 30th

NO CLASS —W, December 2nd

IX. Contemporary Politics in the Middle East

Monday December 7th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Political Development in the Middle East

- *Hariri, Jacob. 2015. "A Contribution to the Understanding of Middle Eastern and Muslim Exceptionalism". *Journal of Politics* 77(2): 477-490
- *Lust, Ellen. 2011. "Missing the Third Wave: Islam, Institutions, and Democracy in the Middle East" *Studies Comparative International Development* 46(2): 163-190

Wednesday, December 9th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

American Interventions in the Middle East

- *Hehi, Aidan. 2013. "The Permanence of Inconsistency. Libya, the Security Council, and the Responsibility to Protect." *International Security* 38(1): 137-159.
- Sachs, Jeffrey. 2015. "A New Century for the Middle East" *Project Syndicate*.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2020. "The US Can Deter Iran but not its Proxies". *Foreign Policy*.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2019. "Getting Counterinsurgency Wrong," *Boston Review*.