

POLSC-AD 130: Introduction to Political Thinking

Lecture: M W 2:40-3:55 pm (Location: (A3) 002)
M W 4:05-5:20 pm (Location: (C2) W008)

Recitation: Su 10:25-11:40am (Location: (C2) W009)
Su 11:50-1:05pm (Location: (C2) W009)
Su 2:55-4:10pm (Location: (A5) 018)
Su 4:20-5:35pm (Location: (C2) E051)

New York University Abu Dhabi
Fall 2018

Duration of Course: 14 Weeks

Course Credits: 4

Prerequisites: None

Prof. **Jeffrey Jensen**

Office: A5, #137

Email: jeffrey.jensen@nyu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30–4 pm (and by appointment)

Instructor: **Alissa Strunk**

Office Space: A5, 1162-C

Email: ams55@nyu.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 am (and by appointment)

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. Readings will be assigned for most lectures, and the subject of the readings will be used to illustrate these concepts and discussed in class. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of many lectures to incentivize you to do the readings. There are also recitations in which 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 the material after. There will be one problem set and two short response papers assigned.

Course Requirements:

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

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Recitation | 15% |
| Response Papers (x2) | 16% |
| Problem Set (x1) | 7% |
| Quizzes | 12% |
| Exam I | 25% |
| Exam II | 25% |

RESPONSE PAPERS: Each student will need to complete two response papers, each of which corresponds to a particular set of readings. Each response paper should be between 2 and 3 (double-spaced) pages, and should provide a brief critical analysis of the readings. *The due dates and eligible readings for each possible response paper, along with the criteria for completing these papers, are posted on NYU classes. One response paper is due before the midterm and one after. See the guidelines for more information.*

PROBLEM SET: There will be one homework assignment, which is due in class on Monday, October 8. You will be expected to analytically apply the theories from class.

Note: Any late assignment will be automatically deducted by one letter grade (10%) per day it is late. Assignments will be returned one week after it is due, after which time it will not be accepted.

QUIZZES: Short quizzes will be given at the beginning of many classes. The quizzes will pertain only to that day’s readings, and will be either short answer or multiple choice. The **ONLY** point of the quizzes is to incentivize you to do the readings.

RECITATION: There will be a grade attached to the recitation and assigned by the instructor. The grade will reflect your preparation for and participation in recitation. Recitation will focus mostly on a set of readings, and you are expected to participate in the discussions of the readings.

Note: Laptops are banned from class. If you spend all of lecture on the internet or phone or otherwise unengaged, points will be deducted from your Quiz and/or Recitation grade

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.

GRADING SCALE – No Exceptions

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|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 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)

Monday, September 3rd

General Introduction

I. Why States?

Wednesday, September 5th

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

- Deaton, Angus. 2015. “Weak States, Poor Countries”. *Project Syndicate*
- Rosen, K. 2018. “Inside the Haywire World of Beirut’s Electricity Brokers,” *Wired*

Saturday, September 8th (NOTE – LEGISLATIVE DAY)

Public Goods and Justice

- Braegger, B. 2013. “Bedouin System of Justice”
- “How Countries Like the Philippines Fall Into Vigilante Violence”. 2016. *New York Times*
- “Taliban Justice Gains Favor as Official Afghan Courts Fail”. *New York Times*. Jan. 31, 2015.

Sunday, September 9th – *Recitation*

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

- 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*

Monday, September 10th

Authority, the Social Contract and State Formation

- Pietrucha, Mike. 2016. “Treating the Islamic State as a State,” *War on the Rocks*
- Farrell, Henry. 2015. “Dark Leviathan: The Reluctant King of the Internet.” *Aeon Magazine*
- “Losing Faith in the State, Some Mexican Towns Quietly Break Away.” 2018. *New York Times*
- “Why are Niger and Mali’s Cattle Herders Turning to Jihad?” 2017. *Wire*

NO CLASS —Wed., September 12th - (Al-Hijra/ Islamic New Year)

Sunday, September 16th - **Recitation**

Authority, the Social Contract and State Formation

- Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development" *American Political Science Review*. 87(3): 567-76

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

Monday, September 17th

What is Democracy?

- Dahl, Robert. 2005. "What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *Political Science Quarterly* 120(2): 187-197.

Wednesday, September 19th

Democracy vs. Authoritarianism, and the Importance of Institutions and Norms.

- Svobik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarianism*, chapter 1.
- "Xi Jinping May Delay Picking China's Next Leader, Stoking Speculation", *NY Times*, Oct. 2016.
- Levitsky, S. and D. Ziblatt. *How Democracies Die*. 2018. chapter 1
- "Norms Matter". Brendan Nyhan. *Politico*. September 2017.

Sunday, September 23rd - **Recitation**

Regime Type discussion and implications

- Mounk, Yascha and Roberto Stefan Foa. 2018. "The End of the Democratic Century" *Foreign Affairs*. May/June 29-36
- Hariri, Jacob. 2015. "A Contribution to the Understanding of Middle Eastern and Muslim Exceptionalism". *Journal of Politics* 77(2): 477-490

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

Monday, September 24th

How is Policy Made? The Basics of Group Choice (MVT)

- "How Putin Played the Far Left", *The Daily Beast*, Jan. 2017

Wednesday, Sept. 26th

Turning Votes into Power: Voting Methods & Electoral Systems

- Pippa Norris. 2004. "Comparing Electoral Systems," chpt. 2 in *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. 26pp
- "PR Thresholds – Too Many Parties can spoil politics". 2016. *The Economist*

NO CLASS — Sunday, September 30th - *Recitation*

Monday, Oct. 1st

Electoral Systems + Governments

- Schleicher, David. 2010. “Without electoral reform, the current system gives Britain the worst of all worlds: US-style primaries in the main parties could be the answer”
- “Gerrymandering is the biggest obstacle to genuine democracy in the U.S. So why is no one protesting?” *Monkey Cage*. Feb. 2017
- “The U.S. could be free of gerrymandering. Here’s how other countries do redistricting.” *Monkey Cage*. Aug. 2017
- “How to Conquer Partisan Gerrymandering” *The Boston Globe*. Dec. 2017
- “Could a third-party candidate win the U.S. Presidency? That’s very unlikely.” *The Washington Post - Monkey Cage*. August 2016

Wednesday, October 3rd

Electoral Systems + Governments (con’t)

- How Erdogan’s Anti-Democratic Government Made Turkey Ripe for Unrest”. *Washington Post*. July 16 2017

Sunday, October 7th - *Recitation*

Democratic Institutions Discussion

- Htun, M., et al. 2013. “Between Science and Engineering: Reflections on the APSA Presidential Task Force on Political Science, Electoral Rules, and Democratic Governance” *Perspectives on Politics*, 11(3): 818-820.

IV. Democratic Institutions II: Elections and Representation

Monday, October 8th

Are Elections Enough to Ensure Representation?

- Achen and Bartels. 2015. *Democracy for Realists*, chapter 1.

HOMEWORK 1 (problem set) – Due: Monday, October 8th (in class)

Wednesday, Oct. 10th

The Role of Political Parties in Representation

- Fearon, J. 1999. "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance." (In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*), p.55-70
- Levy, Jacob. 2017. “The Party Declines – Republican Party Failure.”
- Levitsky, S. and D. Ziblatt. How Democracies Die. 2018. chapter 2

Sunday, Oct. 14th – **Recitation (EXAM 1 REVIEW)**

Political Parties and Representation Discussion

- Corstange, Daniel. 2016. *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East: Clientelism and Communal Politics in Lebanon and Yemen*, chpt. 5.

Monday, October 15th

Political Participation – Why do People Vote? (+ Exam Review)

- Hardin, Russell. 2003. "The Free Rider Problem", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- “Bernie Sanders Just Accidentally Explained Why His political revolution failed”. *Vox.com*. April 2016
- “Voting Matters even if your vote doesn’t”

EXAM I: Wednesday, October 17th (IN CLASS)

NO CLASS —S, Oct. 21 — W., Oct. 25th – FALL BREAK

Saturday, Oct. 27 - Return Graded Exam (**LEGISLATIVE DAY**)

Note – No Readings or Quiz

NO CLASS — Sunday, Oct. 28 — Recitation

V. Why are large-scale Social Movements so rare? Why do they happen at all?

Monday, October 29th

Protest Dynamics and Collective Action

- Sidney Tarrow. 1994. *Power in Movement*, pp. 1-27.

Wednesday, October 31st

Large-Scale Social Movements (Con’t)

- Chwe, Michael. 2001. *Rational Ritual*, pp. 1-25.
- “Facebook Fueled Anti-Refugee Attacks in Germany, New Research Suggest” *The New York Times*. Aug. 2018
- “African Nations Increasingly Silence Internet to Stem Protest”, *NY Times*.

Sunday, November 4th - **Recitation**

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”. *The Wall Street Journal*. Feb., 2011.

VI. Why do we have Violent Conflict?

Monday, November 5th

Causes of Conflict

- “Assad Has Won in Syria. But Syria Hardly Exists.” 2017
- Fearon, James. 2007. “Iraq’s Civil War”. *Foreign Affairs*. 82(2)

Wednesday, November 7th

Identity, Cleavages and Conflict

- Daniel Posner. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Differences”. *American Political Science Review*
- “The Real Roots of the Sunni-Shia Conflict: Beyond the Myths of ‘Ancient Religious Hatreds’”. *Vox.com*. Jan., 2016.

Sunday, November 11th - **Recitation**

- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2008. “The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide” *Security Studies* 17: 568-597

VII. What are the Challenges to Building a State?

Monday, November 12th

State-Building in Historical Context

- Ferejohn and Rosenbulth. 2017. *Forged Through Fire*, chpt 1, 2

Wednesday, November 14th

Challenges to State Building – Social Capital

- 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*.

Sunday, November 18th - **Recitation**

- Rodrik, D. 2016. “Is Liberal Democracy Feasible in Developing Countries?” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 51(1): 50-9

VIII. How does Politics Affect Economic Development?

Monday November 19th

Institutions and Politics (theoretical relationship)

- North, Douglass. 1991. Institutions. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5(1): 97-112

NO CLASS on Wednesday, November 21st (Prophet's Birthday)

Sunday November 25th -- **Recitation**

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and George Downs. 2005. "Democracy and Development." *Foreign Affairs* 84(5): 78.
- "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

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

Monday, November 26th

International Security Architecture & Will Great Powers Make War Against Each Other Again?

- Mearsheimer, John. 2014. "Can China Rise Peacefully?" *National Interest* 25: 23-37
- Gratzke, Erik. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 166-191.

Wednesday, November 28th

International Economic Architecture (WTO, IMF, EU, etc.)

- Rodrik, Dani. 2012. "Who Needs the Nation State?" *Roepke Lecture in Economic Geography*

NO CLASS – Sunday, December 2nd (UAE National Day)

Monday, December 3rd

Politics of Foreign Interventions: Economic Interventions

- Easterly, William. 2008. "Introduction: Can't Take It Any More?" in William Easterly, ed. *Reinventing Foreign Aid*, pp.1-24.
- Sachs, Jeffrey. "The Case for Aid" *Foreign Policy*. January 21, 2014

EXAM II: Wednesday, December 5th (IN CLASS)

Sunday, December 9th —***Recitation***

- Return graded exam
- No Readings

X. Current challenges

Monday, December 10th

Impediments to Political Development in the Middle East

- Blaydes, Lisa. 2017. "State Building in the Middle East" *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Lust, Ellen. 2011. "Missing the Third Wave: Islam, Institutions, and Democracy in the Middle East" *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 46(2): 163-190

Wednesday, December 12th

Con't Middle East Political Development

- "Saudis and Extremism: 'Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters'" *New York Times*. 2016.

Sunday, December 16th —***Recitation***

- Schwarz, Rolf. 2008. "The Political Economy of state-formation in the Arab Middle East," *Review of International Political Economy*, 15(4): 599-621
- Schwedler, Jillian. 2013. "Islamist in Power? Inclusion, Moderation and the Arab Uprisings," *Middle East Development Journal*, 5(1):1-18