WWS 300 DEMOCRACY

Fall 2010, Tu-Th, 10-10:50

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the following topics, among others: the formation of the state, democratic transitions and democratic consolidation, electoral representation and political accountability, policymaking in a democracy, the relationship between democracy and redistribution, welfare and democracy, and colonialism/globalism and democracy.

Here is a sample of the questions we will examine in the course: Why are there states? Under what conditions do countries become democratic? What is the role of civil society in democratic performance? What are the politics of democratic governance? What are the limits of democratic control? What is the role of political institutions in the formation of public policy?

We first explore why economic development has been elusive in most of the globe. After showing the limitations of purely economic models of growth, we consider how political institutions, social norms, the distribution of wealth and the inheritance of colonialism shape growth rates. This discussion of the political and institutional sources of growth also includes an analysis of the historical forces that shaped, in turn, those institutions. Then we consider how democratic institutions function, paying particular attention to whose interests are represented and who governs. We finally consider the extent to which elections and politicians shape the economy in the short run in democratic countries. We close the course by looking at the formation of welfare states across countries – here we pay special attention to differences in the internal structure of public spending between the United States and Europe.

Organization

The course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 10:50 a.m., and each student will also be assigned to a precept. Most of the class meetings will be lectures, but there will also be frequent class discussions.

Required materials will include a few books to be purchased which are available at Labyrinth Bookstore and material on e-reserve through the Stokes Library. Books to be purchased are listed on the syllabus and noted by the symbol (*).
There will be an in-class final examination. Each student will also be expected to submit two four-page response papers, one in lieu of the mid-term examination, the other later in the term. Grading will be based 45% on the final exam, 40% on the two short papers, and 15% on class participation.

Books available at Labyrinth Bookstore


PART I. THE TWIN PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Week 1. Economic Development: Technology or “Institutions”?  

Required Reading  


Further Reading  


Required Reading  
*The Problem of Political Order*  

*Constitutions and Credible Commitment*  


*Dictatorships and Democracy*  

Week 3. Social Norms, Political Culture and Growth  

Required Reading  

sec 2-4 “The Real Advantages Derived…” (read “Public Spirit,” “The Idea of Rights,” and “Respect for Law”); ch. 8 “What Tempers the Tyranny of the Majority…”.


Week 4. One World or Many Worlds? Colonialism, Inequality and Economic Stagnation.

Required Reading
Paul Bairoch. Economics and World History: Myths and Paradoxes. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Chapters 5, 6 and 8. (*)


Week 5. Creating Liberal States and Democratic Regimes.

Required Reading


Week 6: Political Power Within A Democracy

Required Reading
Dahl, Robert Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City ch. , 8, 12,21, and 23


Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. Mackuen, and James A. Stimson. The MacroPolity chapter 1 and 8

Further Reading
Schattschneider, E. E. The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America
Week 7: Parties and Elections

Required Reading


Cox, Gary. *Making Votes Count* ch. 2-3


Key, V.O. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, chapter 14.

Week 8: Legislatures

Required Reading

Arnold, R. Douglas. *The Logic of Congressional Action* ch. 1,2, and 4

Krehbiel, Keith. *Pivotal Politics* ch. 2


David Canon. *Race, Redistricting, and Representation*, ch 1

Further Reading

Lani Guineir *The Tyranny of the Majority*, ch. 4 and 5.

Week 9: Executives and Bureaucracies

Required Reading

Cheibub, Jose *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy* ch. 1-2.


Week 10: Courts

Required Reading

Bickel, Alexander *The Least Dangerous Branch: The Supreme Court at the Bar of Politics*, chapter 1.


Required Reading


Week 12. Globalization and Economic Governance in Democratic Settings

Required Reading


