Course Description

This course introduces students to current empirical and theoretical work done in politics on the following topics: the formation of the state, dictatorships, democratic transitions and democratic consolidation, electoral representation and political accountability, the relationship between democracy and redistribution, and the role of constitutional structures in the aggregation of preferences and in policy-making.

Here is a sample of the questions we will examine in the course: Why are there states? Under what conditions do countries become democratic? When does corruption take place? What is the role of civil society in democratic performance? Do electoral laws matter for representation? When do parties adopt different ideological platforms?

A unifying principle of the course is the assumption that it is possible to develop general theories to explain political phenomena over time and across countries. With this goal in mind, the course relies on analytical (formal-oriented) tools and draws upon cross-national empirical evidence.

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 (available at Labyrinth Bookstore), a Pequod package (also to be purchased), and material on e-reserve through the Stokes Library.

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.
Week 1. Anarchy and State Formation.


Week 2. Dictatorships.


Weeks 3 and 4. Democratization Theory.


Weeks 5 and 6. Democratic Accountability and Democratic Performance.


Week 7. Aggregating Preferences in Representative Democracies.

**Week 8. Electoral Rules and Parties.**


**Week 9. Constitutions.**


**Weeks 10 and 11. Minimal Democracy or Social Democracy?**


J.J. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality.* Entire. (B)

J.J. Rousseau. *The Social Contract.* Parts I and II. (B)

**Week 12. Democracy in a Globalized World.**
