

**Institutional Approaches to Democracy and  
Dictatorship  
CPO 4504  
Spring 2024  
Florida State University  
HCB 0217  
T, Th: 8:00am-9:15am**

**Instructor:** Harley Roe

**Office Location:** Bellamy 223

**Office Hours:** Mondays/Wednesdays on zoom, by appointment

**Email:** [hroe@fsu.edu](mailto:hroe@fsu.edu)

## **Course Description**

This course examines questions about democracy and dictatorship from an institutional perspective. What is democracy and how is it measured, and how does regime affect the welfare of citizens? An emphasis is on the variety of institutional arrangements found in dictatorships. We will ask questions such as:

- What is an institution?
- What are democracies and dictatorships, and how do we identify them?
- How do we compare institutions between regime types?
- What institutions are common between regime types, and which institutions differ?

The first part of the course includes a primer on quantitative political science methodology in order to give students a toolkit to engage with published work. For example, students will learn how to read regression tables and figures and graphs. No prior knowledge is required; all that is required is an open mind and a willingness to learn. Students that have had POS 3713 will see familiar material. Those that have not will be well prepared to take it after this course. This part of the course will include discussion on the definition, measurement, and identification of democracies and dictatorships. The second part of the course identifies the institutional arrangements of democracies and dictatorships and offers discussion on how to compare these features among regime types.

## **Course Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Utilize the methodological tools of political science to interpret statistical results.
- Compare democracies and dictatorships, recognizing how authoritarian states transition to democracies.
- Appraise the form and function of institutions present in democratic and nondemocratic states.

Moreover, as a Liberal Studies Social Sciences Course, students will also meet the goals of two Social Sciences competencies:

- Competency 1 : critically examine, interpret, and explain how personal, political, cultural, economic, and social experiences and/or structures shape the past and/or the present.
- Competency 2 : employ appropriate social scientific and/or historical methods and technology in the selection and appraisal of data, and use these data to assess causal arguments, and analyze assertions and evidence.

Textbook: There is **no textbook required for this course**. All course readings will either be available online through FSU Libraries (a primer on how to navigate the digital course catalog will be included), or will be provided by the instructor.

## Grading Policy

Final grades will be assessed through various measures of your performance in the course:

Reading Guides 20% (4% each)

Research Assignment 30%

Class Participation 10%

Midterm Exam 20%

Final Exam 20%

## Assignment of Letter Grades

Final course letter grades will be assigned based upon the scales shown below:

A	93-100	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	84-86
B-	80-83	C+	77-79
C	74-76	C-	70-73
D+	67-69	D	64-66
D-	60-63	F	59 and below

## **Administrative Policy**

Students are responsible for planning ahead by checking the syllabus for upcoming readings and assignments. Students are responsible for all assigned readings. Therefore, it is imperative that students complete all readings and integrate them into the course as applicable. In addition, all students are responsible to contribute to a positive learning environment for fellow students. The instructor retains the right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is negatively contributing to the learning environment. Cellular phones going off in class are distractions that contribute negatively to the class setting - be sure to turn off your electronic devices at the beginning of each class period.

## **Exams**

Students are expected to be present for all exams at the beginning of the exam period. Students will be allotted the entire class period for the exam. A ten-minute grace period will apply for the beginning of all exam periods. After the initial ten minutes have expired, students will be penalized 10% for arriving late for an exam. Absences or late arrivals for exams will only be excused for participation in formally sanctioned University events, or extraordinary events if they are accompanied by sufficient (i.e. Health Services Excuse Forms) documentation within two calendar days of the absence or late arrival. The instructor reserves the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance as well as what shall be considered "sufficient documentation." If they have been excused for their absence, students will have five working days to make up a missed exam. If there are extraordinary circumstances, which would prevent the student from making up the exam in five working days, the instructor must be informed of this fact prior to the expiration of the five day period. The instructor reserves the right to administer makeup exams of any format (multiple choice, short answer, essay), which may not necessarily correspond to the original exam's format. If a student misses an exam and does not have an excused absence, the student will receive a zero for the exam.

There will be two exams, both of which are equally weighted. They will be in-class, and the dates are scheduled in the syllabus. The format of each exam will be multiple choice and may include short essays and will include any material covered since the last exam. A review day will precede each exam. Exam material will cover concepts, theories, and results from the readings, as well as material from the lectures and reading guides.

## **Research Assignment**

A research assignment will be used to assess Competency 2. The goal of the research assignment is to engage students with academic writing and begin interpreting empirical tests. The research assignment will be broken into two parts, worth 10% and 20% of the final grade respectively. Students will choose a scholarly article from one of the academic journals listed below and a 1-page, single space review of the article. The review must contain 3 components: 1 paragraph

summarizing the main theory (research question) of the article; 1 paragraph summarizing the main findings of the article; 1 paragraph reacting to the article. Additional info will be provided in the rubric on canvas. The 1-pager accounts for 10% of the final grade. Students will need to select their article early in the semester, and will be required to submit their choice to the instructor 1 week prior to the deadline.

List of accepted political science journals:

- Journal of Politics (JOP)
- American Political Science Review (APSR)
- American Journal of Political Science (AJPS)
- World Politics
- Comparative Political Studies

Part two of the project is an extension essay. Students will write a five-page extension of the paper (not including references). Extensions ask, “now that we know what this paper says, where do we go from here?” They are meant to foster engagement with the material in a way that also encourages both critical and creative thinking. Students should draw on theories and methods discussed in class to write their paper. The five-page extension project is worth 20% of the final grade.

Perhaps you have remaining questions that the paper did not answer, the extension is meant to help ask those questions. Some questions you may consider asking in your extension paper include:

- How the concepts and results in a paper apply to a different context (a different location, a different time, a different regime type, etc.).
- Do you disagree with the author’s findings? If so, why?
- Are they missing and key concepts or variables? What would you include if you re-did the study?

These are not all the questions you might ask, but should help get you started. An extension is not a summary of the paper, though students will need to include a brief summary of the paper to help motivate their extension. Start early, extensions are trickier than they might seem at first glance. Further details will be given in class, and a rubric will be made available on Canvas.

## **Reading Guides**

Students will complete several reading guides throughout the semester. These are guided questions designed to help students navigate the readings. Responses to each question will only need to be about 2 or 3 sentences in length. Responses will be due on the days marked in the course schedule. Each guide completed guide will be worth 4% of the final grade. A late penalty of 10% will be applied per day late.

## **Participation**

Class participation will be graded based on the students' performance during daily "RNG of Destiny" questions. Daily questions will be pulled from the reading for that day, and a set of randomly-selected students will need to answer these questions. Students are guaranteed full participation points unless they are called upon during the daily questions and either a) fail to answer the question acceptably, or b) are absent without a university-approved excuse. Some students may never be called upon to answer a question, some students may be randomly-selected multiple times. Therefore, each student must come prepared, having done the reading, or risk losing participation points. Participation is worth 10% of the final grade. Additional instructions will be provided on the first day.

## **Extra Credit**

There are only three opportunities for extra credit offered in this course. On each of the two exams, students will be offered a chance to guess the answers to a series of optional questions. More details will be given closer to the exams. The last opportunity is offered broadly to the whole class. Towards the end of the semester, students will be asked by the university to fill out course evaluations. If the total response rate of these evaluations equals at least 70%, all students will receive an additional 2% increase to their final grade. If the final response rate equals at least 90%, all students will receive an additional 1% increase (for a total of 3%) to their final grade. No other extra credit opportunities will be offered.

## **Incomplete Grades**

No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and the student PRIOR TO the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade. Per the University Registrar's Office: "Incomplete ("I") grades should be recorded only in exceptional cases when a student, who has completed a substantial portion of the course and who is otherwise passing, is unable to complete a well-defined portion of a course for reasons beyond the student's control."

## **Academic Honor Policy**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at

<http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>.) All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless the instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly and properly cited. Students are responsible for policing themselves with respect to plagiarism. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, academic misrepresentation, etc.) will receive a zero for the relevant assignment and will be reported to the proper university officials for further action.

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with the instructor within the first week of class. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: 1. Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) 2. Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating you need academic accommodations. This should be done within the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. If a student's accommodations change during the semester, the student should present an updated letter from the SDRC outlining the specific modifications. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the: Student Disability Resource Center 874 Traditions Way 5 108 Student Services Building Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167 (850) 644-9566 (voice) (850) 644-8504 (TDD) [sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu) <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu>

## **Email Policy**

Please include your first and last name and course information in the subject line of your email. When I receive your email, I will make effort to respond in a timely manner, usually within 48 hours. You may receive a reply sooner than that, but you should not expect an immediate response. Please treat all email correspondences with your instructor as you would treat any other professional exchange. I expect emails to be respectful and polite, to use correct grammar and complete sentences. If you have any questions, please check the syllabus before sending me an email.

## **Syllabus Change Policy**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

## Course Schedule

This schedule is the tentative plan for the course. Depending upon progress, topics may shift in a given week. However, exam dates will not be moved.

Week 1: Tuesday, Jan 9 – FSU Campus Closed – Class Cancelled

Thursday, Jan 11 – Introduction, syllabus review, FSU library primer.

Week 2: Tuesday, Jan 16 – **How do we study institutions? Lecours, Andre. 2005. “New Institutionalism: Theories and Questions.” In New Institutionalism: Theory and Analysis. University of Toronto Press. Available on Canvas.**

Thursday, Jan 18 – Quantitative social science. **Chapter 8: Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. The Fundamentals of Political Science Research. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2nd edition, 2013. Available on Canvas.**

**VIRTUAL SESSION: What are institutions? Weingast, Barry. 1997. “The Political Foundations of the Rule of Law,” American Political Science Review, 91(2): 245– 63.**

Week 3: Tuesday, Jan 23 – How do we identify democracies and dictatorships? **Knutsen, Carl Henrik and Havard Mokleiv Nygard. 2015. “Institutional Characteristics and Regime Survival: Why Are Semi-Democracies Less Durable Than Autocracies and Democracies?” American Journal of Political Science. 59(3): 656–670.**

Thursday, Jan 25 – Elections in democracies pt. 1. **Nichter, Simeon. 2008. “Vote Buying or Turnout Buying? Machine Politics and the Secret Ballot.” American Political Science Review 102 (01): 19-31. Read pages 19-25. Research Assignment 1-pager article selection due.**

**Reading Guide 1 Due.**

Week 4: Tuesday, Jan 30 – Elections in democracies pt. 2 **Nichter, Simeon. 2008. “Vote Buying or Turnout Buying? Machine Politics and the Secret Ballot.” American Political Science Review 102 (01): 19-31. Read pages 26-31.**

Thursday, Feb 1 – Elections in dictatorships pt. 1 **Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. Political Institutions under Dictatorship. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3. Read pages 73-91. Available on Canvas. Research Assignment 1-pager due.**

Week 5: Tuesday, Feb 6 – Elections in dictatorships pt. 2 **Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. Political Institutions under Dictatorship. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3. Read pages 92-101 (Skip appendix). Available on Canvas.**

Thursday, Feb 8 – Electoral institutions synthesis day. **Przeworski, Adam. “Why do Political Parties Obey Results of Elections?”** in Jose Maria Maravall and Adam Przeworski eds. *Democracy and the Rule of Law*. Available on Canvas. **Reading Guide 2 Due.**

Week 6: Tuesday, Feb 13 – Legislatures in democracies pt. 1. **Ofori, George Kwaku. 2019. “Do Fairer Elections Increase the Responsiveness of Politicians?” APSR. 113(4): 963-979. Read pages 963-970.**

Thursday, Feb 15 – Legislatures in democracies pt. 2. **Ofori, George Kwaku. 2019. “Do Fairer Elections Increase the Responsiveness of Politicians?” APSR. 113(4): 963-979. Read pages 971-977.**

Week 7: Tuesday, Feb 20 – Legislatures in dictatorships pt. 1. **Edmond. Malesky, Paul Schuler, and Ahn Tran. 2012. “The Adverse Effects of Sunshine: A Field Experiment on Legislative Transparency in an Authoritarian Assembly,” American Political Science Review, 106:11. 762–786. Read pages 762-786.**

Thursday, Feb 22 – Legislatures in dictatorships pt. 2 + Exam review.

**Reading Guide 3 Due Sunday by 11:59pm.**

Week 8: Tuesday, Feb 27 – **MIDTERM EXAM**

Thursday, Feb 29 – Executives in democracies pt. 2. **Barber M, Bolton A, Thrower S. 2019. Legislative constraints on executive unilateralism in separation of powers systems. Legislative Studies Quarterly. 44: 515–48. Read pages 515-531.**

Week 9: Tuesday, Mar 5 – Executives in democracies pt. 2. **Barber M, Bolton A, Thrower S. 2019. Legislative constraints on executive unilateralism in separation of powers systems. Legislative Studies Quarterly. 44: 515–48. Read pages 532-542.**

Thursday, Mar 7 – Writing Workshop. Bring at least 2 extension ideas to class + study abroad visit.

Week 10: Tuesday, Mar 12 – **SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.**

Thursday, Mar 14 – **SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.**

Week 11: Tuesday, Mar 19 – Executives in dictatorships pt 1. **Slater, Dan. 2003. “Iron cage in an iron fist: Authoritarian institutions and the personalization of power in Malaysia.” *Comparative Politics*. 36 (1): 81–101. Read pages 81-91.**

Thursday, Mar 21 – Executives in dictatorships pt. 2 **Slater, Dan. 2003. “Iron cage in an iron fist: Authoritarian institutions and the personalization of power in Malaysia.” *Comparative Politics*. 36 (1): 81–101. Read pages 82-98. Reading Guide 4 Due.**



- Week 12: Tuesday, Mar 26 – Judiciaries in democracies pt. 1. **Carlin, Ryan, Mariana Castrellon, Varun Gauri, Isabel Jaramillo Sierra, and Jeffrey Staton. 2021. “Public Reactions to Noncompliance with Judicial Orders.” American Political Science Review. 116 (1): 265-282. Read Pages 265 – 273. Available on Canvas.**
- Thursday, Mar 28 – Judiciaries in democracies pt. 2. **Carlin, Ryan, Mariana Castrellon, Varun Gauri, Isabel Jaramillo Sierra, and Jeffrey Staton. 2021. “Public Reactions to Noncompliance with Judicial Orders.” American Political Science Review. 116 (1): 265-282. Read Pages 273 – 282. Available on Canvas.**
- Week 13: Tuesday, Apr 2 – Judiciaries in dictatorships pt. 1. **Helmke, Gretchen. 2002. “The logic of strategic defection: Court-executive relations in Argentina under dictatorship and democracy.” American Political Science Review 96 (2): 291–303. Read pages 291-295.**
- Thursday, Apr 4 – Judiciaries in dictatorships pt. 2. **Helmke, Gretchen. 2002. “The logic of strategic defection: Court-executive relations in Argentina under dictatorship and democracy.” American Political Science Review 96 (2): 291–303. Read pages 296-302.**
- Week 14: Tuesday, Apr 9 – Judiciaries synthesis day. **Gibson, James, Gregory Caldeira, Vanessa Baird. 1998. On the Legitimacy of National High Courts. The American Political Science Review. 92 (2): 343 – 358. Read Pages 343 – 358. Reading Guide 5 Due.**
- Thursday, Apr 11 – Outcomes in Democracies pt. 1. **Gerring, John, Strom Thacker, and Rodrigo Alfaro. 2012. “Democracy and Human Development.” Journal of Politics 74 (1): 1-17. Read pages 1-10.**
- Week 15: Tuesday, Apr 16 – Outcomes in Democracies pt. 2. **Gerring, John, Strom Thacker, and Rodrigo Alfaro. 2012. “Democracy and Human Development.” Journal of Politics 74 (1): 1-17. Read pages 11-15.**
- Thursday, Apr 18 – Outcomes in Dictatorships pt. 1. **Beazer, Quintin and Ora John Reuter. 2021. “Do Authoritarian Elections Help the Poor? Evidence from Russian Cities. Journal of Politics. 84(1): 437-454. Read pages 437-444.**
- Week 16: Tuesday, Apr 23 – Outcomes in Dictatorships pt. 2. **Beazer, Quintin and Ora John Reuter. 2021. “Do Authoritarian Elections Help the Poor? Evidence from Russian Cities. Journal of Politics. 84(1): 437-454. Read pages 444-452.**
- Thursday, Apr 25 – **FINAL EXAM REVIEW Day** + Research assignments due by 11:59pm.

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 2 – 7:30am