Emergence of the Contemporary World

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Course Overview
This course examines the nature of political phenomena and a variety of issues in world politics. Students will gain a basic understanding of the historical, cultural, geographical, and institutional factors that shape the contemporary world. We examine key analytical concepts and contemporary international political issues through lectures, discussions, film and documentaries. The course aims to foster critical inquiry by exploring the intersection between a variety of actors on the global stage, political institutions, ideology, and the structure of the international system governs relations between them.

The course is divided into six parts. Part I introduces the study of world politics and analyzes the recent changes in the international system. Part II looks at the variety of political systems and the various models and theories that help us understand contemporary politics. Part III looks at the important role of democracy and its global impact. Part IV questions the notions of civility in today’s age. Part V examines the role of political violence. Part VI wraps-up the course by asking, is there a coming anarchy?

*Please note that I may make adjustments to the syllabus during the course of the semester.

Required Texts


Course Objectives
• Describe key concepts and their analytical value.
• Critique major aspects of liberal democratic and nondemocratic regimes.
• Evaluate common theories about the relationship between economics and politics and the common mechanisms states have developed to govern the interaction between these aspects.
• Assess the impact of history, culture, key institutions, interest groups, cleavages and major political conflicts of several contemporary political systems.
• The relationship between political ideology and political institutions explored in the course.

Course Requirements
1. Attendance-Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time and remain for the duration of each class. The penalty for excessive absence is a reduction in your attendance grade for the semester.

2. Leading class discussion- Each student will start off a class discussion by presenting a 5-minute summary and analysis of the day’s readings. You should present the main thesis, outline the author’s argument, identify the evidence, and provide the conclusion. Is the argument logically coherent? Does the author provide empirical evidence in support of the main thesis? Offer your own well-reasoned ideas on the topic.

3. Group Work-Working in groups of 4-5 individuals, students will discuss a number of questions that pertain to material we cover during a given session in conjunction with short articles we read in-class. Guidelines will be offered prior to the start of any group session.

4. Three reactions papers- Each student will write three 1 ½ to 2 page reactions papers based on either short films, documentaries and lecture material we cover. Guidelines for reaction papers will be provided before the due dates.

5. The midterm and final exams will be in-class; and with the format to be determined at a later date. The midterm will count for 25% while the final exam will count for 30%.

Course Policy
6. In an effort to be considerate to fellow classmates and the professor, it is expected that once class begins cell phones are cut off or placed on a silent ring tone.

7. Academic Integrity/Plagiarism- Students are expected to honor the standards of academic integrity as outlined in the University catalog. Any work, drawn from sources other than one’s own must be properly documented-that is cited and attributed accurately. If any policies seem unclear, feel free to contact the professor for additional clarification.

8. From time to time, I will include articles accessible in PDF form. I may periodically include articles accessible on blackboard, through the library or other sources.

9. Missed exam policy-Students who miss an exam owing to unexpected circumstances should notify me as soon as possible. Accommodations for makeup exams will be made only in the case of a documented emergency. Students who miss an exam must notify me as soon as possible for alternative accommodations.
10. **Assignments**- All assignments are to be handed to me in class. Emailed assignments will not be accepted because from time to time glitches with email can result in mishaps. Hence I will only accept assignments handed to me personally or left in my mailbox at McQuaid Hall per my specification. On another note, late assignments will suffer a penalty of 5 points off per each day late (except in the case of a documented emergency).

11. **Disabilities**- Let me know of any disabilities that require prescribed attention and keep in mind that your disability should be on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), which is located in Duffy Hall, Room 67. To receive assistance, please self-identify. The staff at DSS will help you to develop a plan for accommodations. For more information contact DSS at (973) 313-6003.

12. **Laptops**- Laptops are allowed for note taking as long as they do not distract you from participation in discussion. However, this policy is subject to change.

13. **Emergency conditions**: In case of unexpected conditions be it weather or otherwise that may possibly disrupt our regular schedule please check your email and/or the School Administrator before class for any updates.

14. **Email Policy**- I will do my best to get back to you within a minimum of 24 hours. However, I am not available on the weekends.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Leading Class Discussions</td>
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<td>Reaction Papers</td>
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<td>Group Work</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Evaluation: Final Grades will based on the following scale:**

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**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Aug 27 & 29**

Class introductions, course outline, and expectations for class assignments, questions

*Why Study Politics?* Chapter 1
Week 2: Sept 3 & 5  
*The Idea of the Public Good: Ideologies and Isms*  
Chapter 2  
Additional Reading TBA  

Week 3: Sept 10 & 12  *International Relations: The Struggle for Power*  
Chapter 17  
Film #1: TBA  

Part II: Political Systems: Models and Theories  

Week 4: Sept 17 & 19  *Utopias*  
Chapter 3  
*Constitutional Democracies*  
Chapter 4  
Reaction Paper #1 Due  

Midterm Exam!!! Oct 10  

Fall Break Oct 15!  

Week 5-8: Sept 24-Oct 17  
*Authoritarianism: Myth and Reality*  
Chapter 5  

Part III: Established and Emerging Democracies  
*Parliamentary Democracy*  
Chapter 7  

Week 9: Oct 22-28  *States and Economies in Transition & The Other World: Development or Anarchy?*  
Chapter 8, pgs180-197 Chapter 9, pgs210-237  

Part IV: Is Politics Really all that Civil?  

Week 10: Oct 31  
Film #2: *Triumph of the Will*  

Part V: Political Violence: Revolution, War, and Terrorism  

Week 11: Nov 5 & 7  *Revolution & War*  
Chapter 15  
Reading TBA-Arab Spring or Mideast Autumn: Syria’s Uprising and the Battle for Egypt  
Reaction Paper #2 Due Nov 5!  

Week 12: Nov 12 & 14  *Terrorism*
Chapter 16 Reading TBD

Film #3: The Devil Came on Horseback
*International Organizations and the Quest for Order*
Chapter 18 Reading TBD

**Part VI: The Coming Anarchy?**

**Week 13: Nov 19 & 21 The Coming Anarchy**
Kaplan, Chapter 1
*The End of Democracy?*
Kaplan, Chapter 2

**Reaction Paper #3 Due**

**Week 14 & 15: Nov 26-Dec 3 Idealism and Limitations**
Thanksgiving break Nov 28!
Kaplan, Chapter 3
*The Creeping Security Sector & Challenges*
Kaplan, Chapters 4 & 5

**Week 15: Dec 5 (Last week of class): Re-imagining a New Foreign Policy**
Kaplan, Chapter 6
*The Value of Realism*
Kaplan, Chapters 7 & 8
Wrap-up session

**Final exam tentatively scheduled for Dec 12**

**Some On-Line Sources:**

**News Sources:**
All Africa News: [www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com)
BBC: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm)
Daily Mail & Guardian: [http://www.mg.co.za/](http://www.mg.co.za/)

**Human Rights Organizations:**
IDMC Monitoring Center: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/](http://www.internal-displacement.org/)

**International Organizations:**

**International Think-Tank Research:**
Brookings Institution: http://www.brookings.edu/
Ford Foundation: http://www.fordfound.org/
Freedom House: http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=1
Institute for Security Studies: http://www.issafrica.org
Wilson Center: http://wilsoncenter.org/

**Non-Governmental Organizations:**
Care: http://www.care.org/
Concern: http://www.concernusa.org/
Doctors Without Borders: http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/
GTZ: http://www.gtz.de/en/
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): http://www.icrc.org/
International Rescue Committee (IRC): http://www.theirc.org/
Oxfam: http://www.oxfam.org/
Save the Children: http://www.savethechildren.org/
World Vision: http://www.worldvision.org/

**Trade Websites:**
Mercosur: http://www.mercosurtec.com/