

**Brock University**  
**POLI 2F30**  
**Dictatorship to Democracy: Politics in the Contemporary World**  
**2017 – Fall Term Syllabus**

**Professor:** Jason Sykes

**Contact:** [jsykes@brocku.ca](mailto:jsykes@brocku.ca)

**Office:** Plaza 338

**Office Hours:** Mon 2 - 4pm

**Lectures:** Mon, Weds 4 – 5pm, GL 164

**Seminars:** 1 - Tuesday 1500-1600 MCC401 (Bohdan Filipowich, [bf11gn@brocku.ca](mailto:bf11gn@brocku.ca))

2 - Wednesday 1500-1600 GL212 (Jason Sykes)

3 - Tuesday 1600-1700 MCA323 (Bohdan Filipowich, [bf11gn@brocku.ca](mailto:bf11gn@brocku.ca))

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to comparative politics, both as a subject within political science and as a methodological approach. As such, we will be studying the politics of various countries while systematically comparing their institutions, customs and societies in order to construct theories about the political world. We will adopt a thematic approach as we seek to account for distinguishing characteristics among states: why are some countries riddled with ethnic conflict while others are not? How are some states able to thrive democratically while others falter? How can we rationalize enduring disparities in levels of socioeconomic wealth across (and within) regions? Our studies will seek to understand these, and many other inquiries, in our quest to understand the persistent political, economic and social diversity which spans the globe.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:**

Students will come away with a heightened knowledge of the political issues and systems associated with various countries and regions around the globe. Further, students will develop analytical skills which embrace the comparative methodology, thereby formulating concrete theories which attempt to explain the differences (and similarities) which exist between and among states.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Dickovick, J. Tyler and Eastwood, Jonathan, Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, 2nd edition. Oxford University Press, 2016.

**COURSE COMPONENTS (FALL TERM ONLY):**

<b>Seminar Participation:</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Research Essay:</b>	<b>20% (Due Nov 24)</b>
<b>Mid-Term Examination:</b>	<b>20%</b>

**Withdrawal Date:** The last date on which you can withdraw from this course without academic penalty is January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**Research Essay: 20% (Due Nov 24)**

Students will be required to write a 10-12 page research paper. Topics and further instructions will be posted on Sakai in the coming weeks. Essays will be submitted both Electronically to turnitin.com via Sakai and in Hard Copy in lecture or via the Political Science essay drop box. Essays will not be considered as “turned in” until the physical copy has been received. **Failure to submit in both hard and electronic copy will result in a grade of Zero.** Students with objections to submitting to Turnitin.com can be accommodated via the inclusion of an annotated bibliography with their essay after consultation with the professor.

**Policy on Late Essays:** Essays submitted after 4:00pm on the due date will be assigned a penalty of -3% per day up to a maximum of 7 days late. Essays that are submitted more than 7 days late will be assigned a grade of 0 (Zero). Accommodations will be made for students who require them per the university policy posted at the end of this syllabus.

**Seminar Participation: 10%**

Seminars are a very important component of this course and not simply due to their weight in the grading scheme. Seminars supplement and expand on the material covered in the course and generate new perspectives and approaches to the material. Students need to be aware that **seminar participation is not synonymous with seminar attendance: your attendance at seminars is the very minimum expectation and attendance alone will not earn you a passing seminar participation grade.** Students are expected to come well prepared for seminars by completing the weekly readings and reflecting upon them. It is not enough to read only part of the assigned seminar material weekly. Each portion of the material is designed to compliment the rest of the assigned group. Ideally students will attend seminar with questions or comments about the assigned material prepared. Students are also expected to engage their discussions in a respectful manner, feeling free to explore and debate a variety issues, but never resorting to personal slights or attacks. **It is the Student's responsibility to ensure they have signed the attendance sheet for each seminar they are present.** Students will not engage in distracting or disrespectful conduct in seminar including texting and/or other personal use of social networking or internet sites during seminars. Such behaviour may result in a mark of zero in seminar.

**Mid-Term Exam: 20%**

The Mid-Term examination will be a three-hour test scheduled in the December examination period. **DO NOT BOOK VACATION UNTIL THE EXAM SCHEDULE HAS BEEN POSTED.** No accommodation will be given to students who have booked vacation during the December exam period.

### **Course Topics and Readings:**

**Sept 6:** Introduction to the Course – Explanations, expectations, questions and answers

**Seminar:** No Seminars

**Sept 11, 13:** Introduction to Comparative Politics

**Lecture Reading:** Dickovick and Eastwood (D&E) Chapter 1

**Seminar Readings:** None - Introductions, expectations, questions and answers.

**Sept 18, 20:** Introduction to Methods

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 2

**Seminar Readings:** The Comparative Approach: An Introduction (D&E Chp 1)

**Seminar Questions:** Is the “Why” any more important than the other “W”s ?

Which is more important: Empirical or Normative arguments ? Think of an example of each.

Are there such things as “Facts”? If so how do we know them from opinions or theories?

Think of examples of most similar systems, and most different systems designs.

Is Political Science, a science ?

**Sept 25, 27:** The Comparative Method

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 2

**Seminar Readings:** Theories, Hypotheses, and Evidence (D&E Chapter 2)

Thinking Comparatively: UN Human Development Index: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

**Seminar Questions:** What Hypotheses can you generate from the data presented by the UN HDI? (Students should come with a hypothesis regarding the data reviewed as it relates to human development)

What trends do you see? What correlations?

What information would you need to test your hypothesis?

**Oct 2, 4:** The State, its Forms and Functions

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 3

**Seminar Readings:** Lipset, Seymour Martin, “Historical Traditions and National Characteristics: A Comparative Analysis of Canada and the United States” The Canadian Journal of Sociology, Vol 11, Summer 1986 Available:

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.brocku.ca/stable/3340795>

**Seminar Questions:** What type of system design does Lipset use? Is this a proper system design? Does he justify it?

What hypothesis and variables can you identify in the article?

What are the most surprising differences and similarities between Canadians and Americans?

Do these still hold true today?

What other possible explanations might account for the differences between the two peoples?  
Do you agree with Lipset's ultimate conclusion?

### **Oct 9, 11: Thanksgiving / Reading Week - No Classes or Seminars**

**Oct 16, 18:** Democracy and Democratization

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 6

**Seminar Readings:** Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), pp. 3-26.

**Seminar Questions:** What is a state in the modern world? Is the state helpful, essential, or inconsequential for human development?

Why do some states provide more services for their people than others? Why does Fukuyama suggest three key institutions are necessary human development? Are there other factors that are necessary?

What examples can you think of where these institutions have failed (or failed to develop) and what are the consequences of this ?

**Oct 23, 25** Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 7

**Seminar Readings:** Gause III, F. Gregory, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability" *Foreign Affairs*, 90, 4 (July / August 2011)

Available:

<http://proxy.library.brocku.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=61295102&site=ehost-live&scope=site> (Or from library)

Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz, "Democratization Theory and the Arab Spring", *Journal of Democracy*, 24, 2 (2013)

Available: <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.brocku.ca/article/504616/pdf> (Or from library)

**Oct 30, Nov 1:** Democracy and Authoritarian Regimes Continued

**Lecture Reading:** No reading this week.

**Seminar Readings:** Puddington, Arch, "A Return to the Iron Fist" *Journal of Democracy*, April 2015 Available: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.brocku.ca/docview/1712244166/fulltextPDF> (Or through Brock Library)

Friedman, Uri, "Is American Democracy Really Under Threat?", *The Atlantic*, June 21, 2017

Available: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/06/american-democracy-trump/530454/>

**Nov 6, 8:** Introduction to Political Economy

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 4

**Seminar Reading:** Putman, Robert D, “What Makes Democracy Work?” *Institute of Public Affairs Review*, 1994, Vol 47.

Available:

<https://proxy.library.brocku.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9501185917&site=eds-live&scope=site>

**Nov 13, 15:** Development: Types, Cause and Effect.

**Lecture Reading:** D&E Chapter 5

**Seminar Reading:** Esping-Anderson, Gosta “The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State”, *International Journal of Sociology*, Vol 20, No 3, Fall 1990

**Available:**

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.brocku.ca/stable/pdf/20630041.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A7fcb60d5a4d3a9ed7170c517d19ffaa4> (Or via Brock Library)

**Nov 20, 22:** Constitutions and Constitutional Design

**Lecture Reading:** D&G Chapter 8

**Seminars:** No Seminars – Work on your Essays

**Nov 27, 29:** Course Wrap Up

**Lecture Reading:** No Lecture Reading

**Seminar Reading:** Pierceson, Jason “Same-Sex Marriage in Canada and the United States: The Role of Political and Legal Culture.” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol 44, Sept 2014

**Dec 4:** Examination Review

**Seminars:** No Seminars this week.

**Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** As part of Brock University's commitment to a respectful work and learning environment, the University will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all members of the university community with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations related to a documented disability to participate in this course, you are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services in the Student Development Centre (4th floor Schmon Tower, ex. 3240). You are also encouraged to discuss any accommodations with the instructor well in advance of due dates and scheduled assessments.

**Academic Accommodation due to Religious Obligations:** Brock University acknowledges the pluralistic nature of the undergraduate and graduate communities such that accommodations will be made for students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event. Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements.

**Medical Exemption Policy:** The University will accommodate students whose studies become interrupted, or who may be unable to complete academic work, due to an incapacitating medical condition. In these situations, the student must complete the Brock University Student Medical Certificate or in case of a concussion, the Brock University Student Health Services Medical Concussion Certificate) and include any relevant medical documentation to support his/her request for academic accommodation based on medical grounds. The University

### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY NOTICE**

All slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams and other course material created by the instructor in this course are the intellectual property of the instructor. A student who publicly posts or sells an instructor's work, without the instructor's express consent, may be charged with misconduct under Brock's Academic Integrity Policy and /or Code of Conduct, and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

