

**States, Regimes, and Contentious Politics**  
**Monday & Wednesday**  
**12pm-1:15pm**  
**Spring 2021**

**Professor:** Adria Lawrence

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will analyze the sources of order and disorder in modern states. In the first part of the course, we will consider how political order is built and maintained in different ways through a variety of institutions, rules, and policies that serve to regulate conflict both among citizens of contemporary states, and between citizens and rulers. In the second part of the course, we will look at challenges to state order, including non-violent protest, civil war, and revolution. The course focuses on substantive themes rather than on a particular region or regions; the readings and course lectures draw on examples from a diverse set of cases.

Each class session focuses on a broad thematic question, such as: why did nation-states form? What makes a state a nation? Why are some states democracies while others are not? How do democracies actually work, and what differentiates them from autocracies? How do people organize to fight oppression? Why does conflict sometimes turn violent? What are the causes of ethnic war?

Drawing on a mix of classic works and contemporary scholarship, we will discuss the answers that scholars have formulated to address these and other questions, paying special attention to research design and the quality of argumentation. An objective of the course is to practice analytic skills by considering and assessing how scholars marshal evidence for and against the arguments they discuss. In short writing assignments, students will be tasked with analyzing pieces from the literature and offering suggestions for how to improve the way we address important political questions. Class sessions will include pre-recorded lectures, interactive lectures with time for questions, and group writing and discussion activities.

## **Requirements & Policies:**

**Writing (40%) Midterm (20%) Final (30%) Attendance and Participation (10%).**

### **Writing Requirement (40%):**

3 short response papers (13% each). For each assignment, take a question posed in class (see the titles below) and critically evaluate an answer to it. This means you may want to raise questions about the readings, point out flaws, or suggest alternative explanations. Consider how convincing the readings are, and how well they address the question at hand. Do not simply summarize the reading or lecture, but offer an analysis of it.

You do not have to carry out research for the response papers or use outside sources. If you do wish to consult other sources – including websites, articles, books, etc. – cite them properly. *You must acknowledge the source of any ideas, research, or language that is not your own. This includes Wikipedia or any online source.* Use quotation marks around any cut-and-pasted material or any direct quotes; if you paraphrase you must still include the source. It is contrary to academic integrity and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit the statements or ideas of work of others as one's own. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or academic integrity, please talk to the instructor or grader. We recommend taking the online course available through the library “[Avoiding Plagiarism.](#)”

**Maximum length:** 2 single-spaced pages, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins. **DO NOT EXCEED!** Students must submit all papers on Blackboard.

Deadlines:     Short Response 1: Friday February 12 at 11pm EST  
                  Short Response 2: Friday March 26 at 11 pm  
                  Short Response 3: Friday April 30 at 11 pm

Deadlines are final to ensure time for grading and reporting; late submissions will be penalized.

**Midterm (20%):** At-home mid-term evaluation: Monday March 8.

**Final (30%):** Cumulative final exam. Scheduled by registrar or take-home.

**Attendance & Participation (10%):** Attendance in virtual sessions is required. You may miss one session without explanation with no penalty. Opportunities to participate will occur through breakout room group discussions and short writing & brainstorming activities. Participation in asynchronous content – prerecorded lectures and podcasts – is also required as part of your participation.

**Readings:** Course readings are required. They can be accessed through the course website on Blackboard. During lectures, I will refer to other works that are not required, but which you may wish to obtain if you would like to explore the issue at hand in greater depth. Reading assignments may change during the semester; I will inform the class of any changes a minimum of one week in advance.

# Course Outline

**January 25 - Virtual Meeting # 1: Introductions & what makes a good explanation?**

## **PART 1: ORDERED POLITICS**

### **PART 1A. STATES & NATIONS**

#### **1. How do states form? (January 27)**

Required:

- Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 169–191.
- Olson, Mancur. 1993. "[Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development](#)." *American Political Science Review* 87 (3): 567–576.

#### **2. How did state formation in Africa differ from state formation in Europe? (Feb 1 & 3)**

Required:

- Bates, Robert H. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Chp. 4: "State Formation in the Modern Era" (pp. 70–83).
- Herbst, Jeffrey Ira. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chp. 1 "The Challenge of State-Building in Africa" (pp. 11–31).
- Boone, Katherine. "Introduction: Property Regimes and Land Conflict: Seeing Institutions and Their Effects." In *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014 (pp. 1-14, chp. 1).

#### **3. What makes a state a nation (and vice versa)? (February 8)**

Required:

- Renan, Ernest. 1996. "What is a Nation?" In *Becoming National*, eds. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 41–55.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 5–33.

## PART 1B: DEMOCRATIC REGIMES

### 4. What makes a country a democracy? (February 10 & 15)

#### Required:

- Przeworski, Adam. 2003. "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense" In *The Democracy Sourcebook*, eds. Robert Dahl, Ian Shapiro and José Antonio Cheibub. Cambridge: MIT Press, 12–17.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2000. "Commitment Problems in Emerging Democracies: the Case of Religious Parties." *World Politics* 32 (4): 379–398.
- Hyde, Susan D. 2020. "Democracy's Backsliding in the International Environment," *Science* 04 Sep: Vol. 369, Issue 6508, pp. 1192-1196.
- Lieberman, Robert C., Suzanne Mettler, Thomas B. Pepinsky, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Richard Valelly. 2019. "The Trump Presidency and American Democracy: A Historical and Comparative Analysis." *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 2 (June 2019): 470–79.
- Ryan L. Claassen, Michael J. Ensley and John Barry Ryan. 2020. "[Why so many Republican officials went along with Trump's fraud claims](#)," *Washington Post*.
- Elizabeth C. Connors. 2020. "[Do Republicans really believe the election was stolen – or are they just saying that?](#)," December 22, *Washington Post*.

\*\*\*Short Response 1 due Friday February 12 \*\*\*

### 5. Does economic development lead to democracy? (February 17)

#### Required:

- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. "[Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy](#)." *American Political Science Review* 53 (1): 69–105.
- Boix, Carles. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Introduction (pp. 1–18), Chp. 3 (pp. 110–129).

### 6. Why don't the poor always seek redistribution? (February 22)

#### Required:

- De La O, Ana and Jonathan Rodden. 2008. "[Does Religion Distract the Poor? Income and Issue Voting Around the World](#)." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4/5): 437–476.
- Thachil, Tariq. "Elite Parties and Poor Voters: Theory and Evidence from India." *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 2 (May 2014): 454–77.

### 7. Are states with natural resources cursed? (February 24)

#### Required:

- Ross, Michael. 1999. "The Political Economy of the Resource Curse." *World Politics* 51 (2): 297 –322. [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world\\_politics/v051/51.2er\\_karl.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v051/51.2er_karl.html).

## **8. How do democracies work? What is the role of political parties? (March 1)**

### Required:

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins, 36–50, 114–141.

## **March 3: Virtual Review Session**

**March 8: Midterm: posted at 12pm. Turn in by deadline.**

## **PART 1C: AUTOCRATIC REGIMES**

## **9. How do authoritarian regimes function? (March 10)**

### Required:

- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2002. “[The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism: Elections without Democracy.](#)” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 51–64.
- Kapuściński, Ryszard. 1982. *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 7–58.

## **10. Why do people obey authoritarian rulers? (March 15)**

### Required:

- Watch online video before session: Milgram, Stanley. *Obedience*. Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 1993: [https://catalyst.library.jhu.edu/catalog/bib\\_8373255](https://catalyst.library.jhu.edu/catalog/bib_8373255)
- Wedeen, Lisa (1999). *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Chp. 1, pp. 1-31

## **11. How does the Iranian Republic use the media to attempt to win the hearts and minds of the Iranian youth? (March 17)**

### Required:

- Bajoghli, Narges. 2019. *Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic*. Stanford University Press. Introduction, pp. 1-25 and Chapter 4 “New Strategies,” pp. 83-100.
- Listen to POMEPS podcast with Professor Narges Bajoghli, Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies, SAIS JHU here: <https://soundcloud.com/pomeps-245027518/narges-bajoghli>.
- Answer comprehension questions on blackboard

**Monday March 22: Day off – no work assigned (JHU “spring break” day)**

## **12. Does culture affect regime type? How? (March 24 & 29)**

### Required:

- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chp. 1 (pp. 3–16) and Chp. 4: “Explaining Institutional Performance” (pp. 83–120). Recommended: skim the rest of the book.

\*\*\*Short Response 2 due Friday March 26 \*\*\*

## PART TWO: SOURCES OF CONTESTATION AND DISORDER

### 13. Collective Action: Why do some groups organize more effectively than others? (March 31)

Required:

- Olson, Mancur. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 5–52.
- Lichbach, Mark I. “What Makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary? Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Collective Action.” *World Politics* 46, no. 3 (1994): 383–418.

### 14. What makes revolutions possible? (April 5)

Required:

- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3–43.
- Kuran, Timur. 1991. “[Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989](#).” *World Politics* 44 (1): 7–48.

### 15. Why are so many civil wars fought across ethnic divides? (April 7)

Required:

- Ashutosh Varshney (2001). “[Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond](#).” *World Politics*, Vol. 53, pp. 362–398.
- Posen, Barry. 1993. “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” in *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, ed. Michael E. Brown. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 103–24.
- Mueller, John. 2000. “[The Banality of Ethnic War](#).” *International Security* 25 (1): 42 – 70.

### 16. What causes civil war? (April 12)

Required:

- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. “[Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War](#).” *American Political Science Review*, 97 (1): 75–90.

**Wednesday April 14: Day off – no work assigned (JHU “spring break” day)**

**17. Why did protests erupt in the Arab World in 2011? Why did only some succeed? (April 19)**

Required:

- Brownlee, Jason, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. 2013. "[Tracking the Arab Spring: Why the Modest Harvest?](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 24 (4): 29–44.
- Chomiak, Laryssa. 2011. “The Making of a Revolution in Tunisia.” *Middle East Law and Governance* 3, pp. 68-83.

**18. How do people respond to mass violence? (April 21)**

**Guest Lecture:** Eugene Finkel, Associate Professor of International Affairs, SAIS.

Required:

- Finkel, Evgeny. 2017. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. “Introduction,” pp. 4-20.

**19. Why do some actors use violence while others choose non-violent strategies? (April 26)**

Required:

- Lawrence, Adria (2010). “[Triggering Nationalist Violence: Competition and Conflict in Uprisings against Colonial Rule.](#)” *International Security* 35:2 p. 88-122.
- Stephan, Maria J and Erica Chenoweth (2008). “[Why Civil Resistance Works: the Strategic Logic of Non-Violent Conflict.](#)” *International Security* 33: 1, pp. 7-44.

**April 28: Review in preparation for final exam**

**\*\*\*Short Response 3 due Friday April 30\*\*\***