Introduction to World Politics

Since the end of the Cold War, people have debated what kind of world we are entering. Are countries becoming more democratic, and will all states follow something akin to the model in the United States? Or are differences between countries becoming even more apparent, with old ethnic rivalries, styles of governance, religious movements, having an impact on the divergent evolution of regimes?

In this course, we will study how and why we should compare political systems, and how comparative study teaches us not only more about the world, but also more about our own country or countries. In order to facilitate a broader geographical reach for the course, we will be focusing primarily on the theoretical question of democratization — whether states are democratizing, whether democracy is in fact desirable, and what the emergence of new democracies teaches us about life in our own. To that end, we will be comparing politics
primarily in four countries, though other countries will be discussed on occasion. These are Britain, Japan, China, and Nigeria.

**Required Readings**

You are also required to stay on top of current events. The only good way of doing so is to start a habit of reading newspapers daily – 15 minutes are all you need for a quick browsing. I recommend those prominent papers with analytical coverage on international affairs: for example, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Financial Times*. Special subscription rates are available for some of these publications. They are also available at Penrose Library. If major events about the countries we are examining break out (like the earthquake in Japan), I reserve the right of adding new reading assignments and including them in exams.

**Grading Structure**
1. Quizzes: 30 points (10 points each)
2. Midterm: 100 points
3. Final: 100 points
4. Attendance: 10 points

Total: 240 points

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**Class Policies**
1. I do NOT allow the use of laptops in my lectures. Please use a writing implement and paper to take notes. If the use of a laptop is absolutely necessary to you, please contact me and I will direct you to relevant administrative offices for documentation. Otherwise, no exceptions are allowed.
2. You know all the dates of quizzes and exams on the first day of class. I rarely arrange makeup exams and quizzes and can only do so for students whose medical or other emergencies can be substantiated by documentation. No documentation, no makeup exam/quiz.
3. If you email me, please make sure that “World Politics” is in the subject header. I am receiving quite many emails from different professional venues on a daily basis, and I want to make sure that everything you send me ends up in the right mailbox.

4. Professors have names. If a message does not have a proper salutation (i.e., if it just starts with something like “hi, when is the exam”), I treat it as a spam.

**Organization of the Course**

1. **Sept. 8 - 15: Comparing Political Systems**  
   Finish “Introduction” by Sept. 15

2. **Sept. 17-29: Politics of Great Britain**  
   Finish “United Kingdoms” by Sept. 29  
   Quiz on Sept. 29

   Finish “Japan” by October 13  
   Quiz on Oct. 8  
   Midterm Exam: Oct. 15 (in class; closed-book and closed-notes)

4. **Oct. 20 – Nov. 3: Politics of China**  
   Finish “China” by Nov. 3

5. **Nov. 5 – Nov. 12: Politics of Nigeria**  
   Finish “Nigeria” by Nov. 12  
   Quiz on Nov. 10

   **Final Exam: Noon-2pm, November 17**