COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course we will:
1. Learn how to think critically about the nature of government, politics, and political change.
2. Investigate how democratic transformations occur and consider why these transformations are so difficult, with Britain, Germany, and Afghanistan as cases.
3. Examine how some countries “do” democracy with direct comparisons made to the United States.
4. Through the readings, apply what we are learning to the real world.

REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

* First exam (February 7): 15.0% (60 points)
* Second exam (February 28): 20.0% (80 points)
* Third exam (April 6): 25.0% (100 points)
* Participation: 15.0% (60 points)
* Final exam: 25.0% (100 points)
Total: 100.0% (400 points)

Exams and required readings: Each exam will draw upon information from the required readings, course lectures, and discussions. Although we will cover a lot of ground in class, we will not be discussing every element found in the readings. What is not discussed in class is up to you to read and think about on your own. This is part of the college experience. You will be given guidance each week on how far ahead to read. Please note that the exams are cumulative. The final examination will be given at its scheduled time, Friday, April 27, 12:00-2:30 p.m.

Participation (including attendance, class discussion, and preparation): Fifteen percent of your course grade will be awarded on the basis of attendance, preparation, and class discussion. The baseline grade for participation is 77 percent (that is, a “C+”) for devoted attendance, without any other participation in the course. Repeated absences will mean a lower grade. Regular participation, with devoted attendance, will normally mean a higher grade. Active participation is a good way to demonstrate not only that you are doing the reading but also thinking about the reading. Participation is also a great way to get people involved in the course. Your final participation grade will be based on both quality and quantity. Short, in-class writing assignments or quizzes may also be part of this grade.

Please note: Following university academic regulations, first-year students “will be withdrawn from a course if absent, for any reason, 15 percent of the class meetings. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors will be
withdrawn from a course if absent 25 percent of the class meetings. In both cases, a failing (F) grade [for the course] will be recorded unless the absences were due to providential reasons, in which cases a withdrawal (W) grade [for the course] may be assigned after consultation with the Associate Academic Dean.”

A note on academic integrity: As in all walks of life, integrity on college campuses is important. Cheating on exams signifies a lack of integrity and character. The penalties for cheating are severe, up to and including a failing grade for the course and university disciplinary action (which may result in expulsion from Furman).

Electronic devices in class: As a courtesy to the class, cell phones and other similar devices should be turned off and put away, out of sight, in your backpack or purse before you walk into the classroom. Not abiding by this policy will negatively affect your participation grade. On exam days, if I see a cell phone or other similar device (e.g., a smart phone) in your hand, on your lap, on your desktop, or anywhere else other than put away and out of sight in your backpack or purse, you will fail the exam, regardless of the reason.

Laptops and other similar devices are prohibited (please see “Digital Distractions,” on Moodle). Audio/video recording of class lectures and discussions without my permission is prohibited.

Please note: Failure to complete any of the requirements listed in this syllabus for reasons other than providential will result in an “F” for the course.

Accessibility Resources at Furman: Students who think they may need an academic accommodation in this course should immediately make an appointment to see Judy Bagley, the director of Furman’s Student Office for Accessibility Resources. Her office is in room 002, in the lower level of the Earle Infirmary. She may be reached at 294-2320.

A note on classroom decorum: Once class begins no one is to leave the room until class ends, except for a medical emergency. This includes times when we are viewing documentaries or any other multimedia materials. Failure to abide by this standard will mean a lower grade in the course.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Section 1: Thinking Critically about World Politics
* Klesner, chapter 1 (pp. 1-12): “Comparative Politics: What is It? Why Study It?”
* Klesner, chapter 2: “Critical Thinking about Politics: Analytical Techniques of Political Science—The Logic of Hypothesis Testing.”

Section 2: The Politics of Democracy and Dictatorship
A. Ten Conditions for Democratic Development
* Klesner, chapter 5: “Democracy: What is it?”
* Klesner, chapter 4: “States and Nations: Nationalism, Nation Building, Supranationalism.”
B. Developing Democracy in Western Europe

I. The English Experience: the triumph of liberalism and the modern state
* Acemoglu and Robinson, “The Turning Point” (pp. 182-212). [Moodle]
* Klesner, chapter 13 (pp. 271-282): “The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.”

* Klesner, chapter 10 (pp. 201-204; 220-222): “Ideology.”

2. The German Experience: the failure of democracy (but the survival of the state)
* Klesner, chapter 15 (pp. 343-350): “Germany.”
* Klesner, chapter 10 (pp. 204-213): “Ideology.”
* Klesner, chapter 9: “Political Culture.”

C. How Democracy Works

I. Political Power, Institutions, and the State
* Klesner, chapter 1 (pp. 12-22): “Comparative Politics [Sources of Political Conflict],”
* Klesner, chapter 13 (pp. 282-305): “The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.”

2. Parties and Interest Groups
* Klesner, chapter 8: “Political Participation: People and Politics in Democracies and Nondemocracies.”
* Klesner, chapter 15 (pp. 350-376): “Germany.”

Final Exam: Friday, April 27, 12:00-2:30 p.m. (This exam is cumulative.)