Since the end of the Cold War, there has been no universal political ideology challenging democracy. While authoritarianism still exists in the form of military dictatorships and Islamic-based fundamentalisms, a general understanding that eventually all political roads eventually lead to democracy is reflected in what Francis Fukuyama once classified as the “end of history”. However, the outbreak of ethnic-based conflicts from the Balkans to the Caucasus, to Africa and the Middle East, have raised questions on the universality of democracy, and led to the conclusion that we are now experiencing what Sam Huntington (in)famously termed a “clash of civilizations”. Whatever the beliefs, and whatever the political orientation, we are faced with a set of unavoidable facts: culture matters, identity matters, and most importantly, history matters; and they can matter more than democracy, civic co-fraternity, and economic cooperation.

Even more sobering is the harsh reality that since the end of the Cold War, and particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, both knowledge and understanding of culture throughout the world is severely limited in U.S. foreign policy. An inability of viewing societies beyond macrosocial categorizations has seriously impeded efforts in understanding how democracy works, and in many cases has actually worked at entrenching non-democratic regimes and undermining states Washington has sought to assist. It is thus critical for the study of politics to analyze the ways in which culture shapes political behavior and activity.

This course will discuss how various aspects of culture affect social relations and political decision-making. The course will center around three central questions:

- How is political activity and behavior shaped by culturally specific symbolic meanings and social codes?
- How and under what conditions do cultural identities (such as ethnicity and religion) become politicized in different political systems?
- How does the relationship between culture and politics shape our understanding of different areas of analysis in political science, such as, political economy, state formation, political participation and social movements?

We will address both theoretical and empirical studies of these themes and will draw on cases in both advanced industrialized as well as industrializing nation-states.

**NOTE:** There are no formal prerequisites for this course, but this is not a course for the apathetic or the lazy. The material is thorough, the workload is heavy, and I hold a lot of expectations. Please make sure you can meet the requirements and assignments.
Course Requirements

The structure of this class will not simply entail lectures and note taking. Readings will be followed by writing assignments meant to demonstrate the student’s ability to apply the concepts and knowledge learned. You are encouraged to challenge all conceptual formulations and develop your own approaches to problems discussed in the course. Do not simply take the arguments in the readings as be-all, end-all proclamations. Because the class will rely heavily on discussions of the readings and critically analyzing points and counter-points to many arguments, it is critical you attend class prepared, and arrive having completed the required reading and listened to the provided lectures. Lectures are not solely based on assigned readings but will build on what we have read with new information provided by me. I have absolutely no problem giving unannounced quizzes if I feel the class is not keeping up.

Students’ final evaluation will be determined by the following criteria:

- First paper assignment 15%  Paper due June 10
- Second paper assignment 20%  Paper due June 17
- Final exam (take home) 40%  Paper due no later than 11:59 PM July 3
- Class participation 25%  See description below

All papers must be submitted in hard copy and uploaded to Sakai. Late papers will result in a deduction of 1/3 of a grade each day they are late – including weekends. You may post your late paper to halt any additional penalties, but it must be followed up with a hard copy. There are no extensions. Assignments are given well in advance for you to manage your time.

Please refer to the Essay Policy Guide located on Sakai for full requirements on format, content, page length, and bibliographical citation for each assignment.

A Hybrid Course (in 6 weeks!)

All class related materials will be located on our Sakai site, which will provide you 24/7 access to readings, discussions, additional sources of information, as well as assignment postings. Go to https://sakai.rutgers.edu to log in. The website will be divided into Weeks as categorized in the syllabus and allow you to post your thoughts and comments on either topics covered in lecture or what you picked up in the readings. If you are having difficulty finding your way around, click the Website Navigation link for assistance.

Because this class is being offered as a truncated hybrid summer course, all lectures will be pre-recorded and posted on Sakai. Our “week” will begin at 12:00 AM every Wednesday and conclude the following Tuesday in class. Within that week, you are expected to complete the assigned readings and listen to the lecture. They will be posted on Sakai as .mp4 files that include video screen captures of the accompanying PowerPoint file, so it is recommended you take notes while listening, though you can listen to them anywhere and on any device (laptop, desktop, smartphone, etc.) These lectures should run between an hour to an hour and a half, though they are designed for you to start and stop in different locations. You are free to listen at any time and at your own pace within the designated week but you must have all materials completed for the following Tuesday, which will be completely devoted to discussion and analysis.

Course Readings

There are no books for you to purchase. All readings are available for .pdf download via Sakai.
Final Exam

Your Final Exam will be a take home writing assignment similar to the smaller writing assignments during the semester. The only difference is that it relies on the entire series of materials studied in class. You are encouraged to use as many readings as possible to address the provided questions and consult me on framing your outline of study. The exam will be open book but severely time limited: you will have 48 hours to develop your answers. All submissions during the semester will be compared with the turnitin database to check for originality.

Statement on Class Participation

Class participation is accumulated throughout the semester through active engagement. This includes speaking in class discussion, posting online comments, successfully answering unannounced quizzes and short writing assignments, and coming to office hours (if necessary). Each time a student “participates”, a point will be awarded, with a maximum of 25 to be earned by the end of the semester.

Students will be expected to read the assigned material, listen to the lectures, examine the online discussions and post a minimum of three messages per week in response to these discussion topics. These are weekly, per unit assignments and will be graded towards your class participation. You can certainly post messages in the discussion for a unit after the date that the unit ends if a threaded discussion is ongoing (and of course interesting!), but you must post a minimum of three when that is the current section.

When posting a comment, please refer to the Participation Criteria located on our Sakai site for proper structure. You should post at least one original thought in response to the provided questions. You may reply to other students, to me, or you may choose to expand on one of your previous posts. But please remember to post at least three times a week to new topics!

As stated above, you are required to participate online, so following the minimum standards should yield you 18 out of 25 points online alone. Please note that attendance is not related to participation. You can have a perfect attendance record but if you remain silent, you are not “participating”.

Forums serve as our online discussion center, a critical component for your Class Participation.

New discussion questions will be posted by 8 PM of the day we finish the previous lesson. For instance, we will begin the section of social character with Sam Huntington's reading on 6/4. Discussion questions will be posted by 8 PM the evening of 5/28, which would be our previous lecture. This is to give you as much time as possible to read the material for the next lesson and contribute online.

Forums are divided by major syllabus section, and each has a series of topic questions. In total, there should be about ten discussion questions throughout the semester for you to contribute to. I would like you to post at least one new comment to each topic and reply to at least two other posts. Not only does this keep you active and up to date on readings, it also contributes to your participation score.

To receive Participation credit your messages should be:

1) Informed: Do your posts demonstrate that you have done the reading and understood the lectures? "Informed" questions are those that come from interacting with the reading and presentation. On the other hand, a quick way to not get credit is to ask a question or make a comment that shows that you have clearly NOT done all of the reading for that unit.
2) Analytical: Your posts should demonstrate that you've analyzed the reading as well as the lectures and thought about them. What are the issues? What questions does the material raise? How is this material different or similar to the material we've studied in earlier units?

3) Interactive: Are you genuinely interacting with the other students, exchanging ideas, disagreeing (politely) with each other, making the case for your point of view, listening to other points of view. Analyzing their posts and assessing what they say about your ideas? Merely saying, "I agree with what you said." is not enough! If you agree with someone, that's great. But you'll need to expand the discussion further by contributing to the issue.

4) Detailed: Are you really thinking about the topic or are you throwing out a quick answer? While I'm not expecting you to write a treatise on comparative political culture, I would like to see at least a paragraph or two in your responses. Put some thought into your comments. Even if someone has previously posted something you agree with, you can always find new angles and interpretations. Your opinions DO matter as well! These discussions are meant to get your take on the subject matter.

5) Objective: Are you trying to be "objective", accurate and fair, examining both sides of issues where people disagree? When making a point, are you anticipating how others who disagree with you might respond?

You are certainly welcome to post as many comments to a discussion board as you like. Each question will remain up for the duration of the semester, allowing discussions to continue past each week. By all means, if there's an interesting debate, keep it going! But please remember to contribute at least once to every new topic.

Grade Evaluation

All grading criteria, including assessments for writing assignments will be posted on Sakai.

Policy Statements

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. Because we only meet six times, missing class puts you at a significant advantage. The student is responsible for obtaining any and all work missed. Two or more unexcused absences may affect your overall course grade. Three or more unexcused absences may result in you failing the class. Any absence due to illness or previous engagement must be accompanied by a doctor's note or other official letter explaining the reason for not being in class. Excused absences will be given in the event of holidays of religious observance or serious conditions that require medical care. Students taking part in the latter should notify me with documentation before the dates they will not be in class. Four or more unexcused absences may risk you failing the course. For the official University Attendance Policy, see http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/courses/registration-and-course-policies/attendance-and-cancellation-of-class.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity encompasses standards of honesty and truth. For the student this largely entails ensuring all work presented is their own with full credit being given to all sources and materials used and consulted in their projects. With the pervasiveness of the Internet and the ability of students to obtain material from an array of digitized sources, prevention of plagiarism is more important than ever. Cases of plagiarism are in clear violation of academic integrity and will be dealt with in accordance to the severity of the case. For a complete description of Rutgers' Policy on

Students with Disabilities: This course meets standard University policies and provisions with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy. Students with documented disabilities with the University and are in need of certain academic accommodations should notify me as soon as possible with an official note from the Rutgers Office of Disability Services. Information on disability support can be found at [http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/](http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/). All information will be kept strictly confidential.

**Class Schedule**

**Introduction: What is Culture?**

5/27: Conceptualizing Political Culture


**PART I: Theoretical Approaches to Political Culture**

5/28 – 6/3: Theories of Social Capital

- Putnam, ch. 6: “Social Capital and Institutional Success”, pp. 163 – 185

6/4 – 6/10: Theories of Social Character, and Political Symbolism as a Dynamic Variable of Culture

- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22 – 49

*** First Writing Assignment Due June 10 ***

**PART II: The Role of Culture in Collective and Historical Memory**

6/11 – 6/17: Theories of Collective and Historical Memory


*** Second Writing Assignment Due June 17 ***

PART III: Culture as a Tool of Democracy and Authoritarianism

6/18 – 6/24: How Culture (Ab)Uses the Past to Legitimize the Present


6/25 – 7/1: How Culture can (Re)Construct a Democracy: A Way Forward?


*** Final Writing Assignment Due July 3 ***