Course Overview

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**. Class 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 20% Paper due October 15
- Second paper assignment 30% Paper due December 10
- Final exam (take home) 30% Paper due no later than 11:00 AM Dec 17
- Class participation 20% 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 see the evaluation criteria both in the syllabus and online for how grades are reached.

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 cumulative and take-home. Assignment sheets will be given Dec 9. You are to upload a completed paper to Sakai by 11:00 AM Dec 17.

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 20 to be earned by the end of the semester. 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”.

Please see the evaluation criteria, both in this syllabus and online for what qualifies for a participation point.
A Recorded Course

A significant portion of this class will be digitally recorded for future use in multimedia learning. As such, there is a possibility that students will appear on camera and their comments will be recorded. University policy requires me to inform students the class will be recorded as well as indicate which rows and seats will be within the “camera range”, giving you the chance to sit elsewhere if you do not wish to be on camera. Videos of lectures with presentations will eventually be posted online but not via our Sakai site and will have no connection to the current class, nor function as a component to any grade requirement. A release form is attached at the end of the syllabus for student review, signature, and submission to me as soon as possible.

Policy Statements

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. The student is responsible for obtaining any and all work missed. Two or more unexcused absences may affect your overall course grade. **Participation points will be deducted for every unexcused absence more than four times.** 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, serious conditions that require medical care, required attendance in court or other government bodies, and participation in intercollegiate athletic events. 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](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 Academic Integrity, its descriptions and penalties, see: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf)

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.

Classroom Etiquette: Students are expected to arrive to class on time and be ready to engage the material. Coming to class late, texting, or web surfing during class time are all prohibited. Chronic violators will first be warned and, if continued, have their participation grade affected. Students should also inform me before class begins if there is a need to leave early.

Emailing: I will almost always respond to your email within 24 hours. However, due to the increasing number of emails from students who ask questions that can easily be answered by referring to the syllabus, I will either ignore your email or simply reply with “Syllabus” if the answer lies within.
## Grading Evaluation Criteria

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<tr>
<th>Paper Assessment</th>
<th>OUTSTANDING (A)</th>
<th>GOOD (B+/B)</th>
<th>SATISFACTORY (C+/C)</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY (D/F)</th>
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<td><strong>Student is able to produce a written argument that is clear from the Introduction, and provides solid analysis throughout.</strong></td>
<td>An argument is present but tends to rely more on provided description from readings than a clear and independent analysis.</td>
<td>Attempts at creating an argument fall short with simple summarization of material or repetition of one or two ideas with little to no explanation. No clear idea or thesis is presented on the first page, and no definitive conclusion is reached by the end.</td>
<td>Paper has little to no focus from start to finish. Independent analysis is either completely lacking or focuses on something entirely different from the question(s) asked.</td>
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<td>Little to no grammatical mistakes or errors in syntax.</td>
<td>Overall writing is good, but a few and noticeable spelling, grammatical errors and syntax are present. Student may put a book title in quotes instead of italicize and vice versa.</td>
<td>Grammatical mistakes are present with no indication the student performed any proofreading or Spellcheck. Material is improperly cited both within the paper and in the bibliography.</td>
<td>Multiple spelling errors, grammatical errors, sentence errors, broken sentences, awkward writing, paragraphs that end mid-sentence, paragraphs with two sentences, gratuitous spacing to &quot;pad&quot; page limits.</td>
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<td>Organization of material has a logical flow from inquiry to hypothesis to investigation and finally to argument based on deductive and/or inductive reasoning.</td>
<td>Organization of material is largely clear, but paper is largely divided into describing one case at a time instead of providing some analytical synthesis.</td>
<td>Paper is largely unorganized with no logical flow of ideas from one point to another. Topics in paragraphs abruptly shift focus. Paragraphs are more than a page long and provided information is tangential.</td>
<td>No rhyme or reason to organization. Paper has no logical flow of argument or focus.</td>
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<td>Use of readings and class notes is thorough and contributes to the student's own reasoning.</td>
<td>Readings and class notes are cited and helps to provide the student with understanding the material. A bibliography is also present at the end.</td>
<td>Little to no use of readings, or student relies on only one source, usually class notes. Student also uses Wikipedia, the Dictionary, or an online encyclopedia for material that is covered in class.</td>
<td>Paper either ignores citing any readings or quotes entire paragraphs instead of providing the student's own thoughts. Cited material is anything but class-based material.</td>
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<td>Use of readings and class notes are properly cited throughout the paper and a full bibliography is provided at the end.</td>
<td>Paper is a bit short of the requested word count/page limit, or exceeds word count/page limit because of summarization.</td>
<td>Paper fall significantly short of the requested word count/page limit.</td>
<td>Paper is extremely short of word/page limit by at least half. No proper bibliographical material is provided.</td>
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<td>Paper is as close to the requested word/page limit as possible.</td>
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<td>Turnitin indicates large parts of the paper has been copy/pasted from somewhere else.</td>
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### Online Participation

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<tr>
<th>PARTICIPATION POINT AWARDED FOR:</th>
<th>PARTICIPATION POINT DENIED BECAUSE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Post demonstrates that the student has done the reading and understood the material being addressed.</strong> Post clearly connects with a point raised in the lectures or derived from at least one of the assigned readings.</td>
<td>Post shows little to no connectivity with the topic question, nor gives any indication the information provided has any connectivity with or relevancy to assigned readings and lectures.</td>
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<td>Post relies on material dervied from class (as mentioned above) but also provides personal insight and thinking instead of simply repeating material verbatim</td>
<td>Posts are short, undeveloped comments that don't move the discussion forward. Posts are only a few sentences, or simply &quot;agree&quot; with what was said above. Students should not be rewarded with participation points for short comments while others take more time to write out one's thoughts and ideas.</td>
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<td>Interactions with other students follow basic protocols of &quot;netiquette&quot;, which may including disagreeing or even arguing with another, but the tone of writing remains professional and refrains from insults, <em>ad hominem</em> attacks, and other types of &quot;trolling&quot;.</td>
<td>Interaction with other students becomes unprofessionally confrontational. Usage insults, <em>ad hominem</em> attacks, and other types of &quot;trolling&quot; are used in lieu of an intelligent post.</td>
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Class Schedule

Introduction: What is Culture?

9/2: Taking Cultural Preferences Seriously in Political Science

- Read the syllabus, familiarize yourself with the website

9/8 – 9/9: Conceptualizing Political Culture


PART I: Theoretical Approaches to Political Culture

9/14 – 9/16: Theories of Social Capital

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

9/21 – 9/23: Critiques of Social Capital


9/28 – 9/30: Theories of Social Character

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

10/5 – 10/7: Political Symbolism as a Dynamic Variable of Culture

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

10/12 – 10/14: Theories of Collective Memory


*** First Writing Assignment Due October 14 ***

10/19 – 11/4: How Nations Remember their History


PART III: Culture as a Tool of Democracy and Authoritarianism

11/9: How Culture (Ab)Uses the Past to Legitimize the Present


11/11 – 11/16: How Culture Legitimizes and Brings Down Governments

11/23 – 11/30: How Culture can (Re)Construct a Democracy: A Way Forward?


11/25: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

EPILOGUE: American Pop Culture as a Universal Model?

12/2 – 12/7: Consumerism as Patriotism and Patriotism as Consumerism


12/9: That Ain't No High Culture You Got!


12/9: Last Day of Class

- Concluding thoughts on class and last-minute questions by students

*** Second Writing Assignment Due December 7 ***

*** Take Home Final Exam Due uploaded to Sakai no later than 6 PM Dec 15 ***

- You may of course upload your paper to Sakai any time between Dec 11 and Dec 15. I will begin grading papers as soon as they are uploaded.