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How can we explain war? International cooperation? The rise of the Nazis? Suicide terrorism? The recent uprisings in the Arab world? The discipline of political science provides a set of conceptual tools to explain these diverse phenomena. This course is meant to introduce students to the systematic study of politics in order to move us beyond mere opinion toward substantive knowledge based on rigorous social science methods. By investigating these puzzling and vexing questions, and many others, students will sharpen their analytical skills and be better able to explain complex political phenomena. This course is intended for non-majors and for those considering majoring in Political Science. (Open to non-majors; for majors: fulfills intro course requirement.)

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Why are some countries democracies while others are dictatorships? What consequences do democracy and dictatorship have for economic development and the well-being of citizens? What factors promote democratic transitions and democratic consolidation? What are the key challenges to new democracies (ethnicity, corruption, clientelism, conflict), and how are they overcome? Why do ethnic divisions lead to conflict in some countries, but not in others? This course will address these and other questions by drawing examples from a multitude of countries representing different regions of the world, and mixing lectures with short films and student discussions.

diverse array of fields including economics, international relations, military strategy, artificial intelligence and biology. This course introduces students to the basic concepts of elementary game theory in a way that allows students to begin solving