

# Oxford University Summer Programme in International Politics 2009

## Courses

### **Political Transformation in the Contemporary Middle East** **Professor Fred Lawson**

Fundamental changes in the politics and political economy of the Middle East have passed largely unremarked in the outside world. Single party regimes have opened the door to a resurgence of multi-party competition; state-led economic programmes have been replaced by policies that favour private enterprise and foreign investment; militant Islamist movements have either disappeared or altered their objectives and tactics; and ethnicity has become a potent basis for popular mobilisation. These trends will be explored in five key countries: Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq. Attention will be given to how such dynamics reinforce authoritarian rule.

### **Democratisation and Multi-Party Politics in Africa** **Dr Nic Cheeseman**

The course asks the big questions about the fate of democracy in Africa. Why has democratic consolidation proved so elusive? Do strong ethnic identities undermine democracy? What is the relationship between ethnicity, democracy, and violence? What does the future hold for Africa's new multi-party states? The course is arranged thematically and focuses on three main questions. First, what explains the rise of multi-party politics in Africa? Second, how are multi-party elections contested in Africa? Third, what are the chances for democratic consolidation in Africa? The course draws on classic works on democratisation as well as the established literature on transition from authoritarian rule in Africa. The empirical material is culled from a broad range of African cases allowing students to pursue case studies of particular interest through the course.

### **Power Politics and Policy in China** **Dr Suzanne Xiao Yang**

The course examines the character of politics in China, the organisation of power and the policy-making process. It focuses on five main themes and questions. First, what are the structural settings and dynamics of politics in China? Second, how is power conceived? Third, how does the organisation of power shape decision-making? Fourth, what is the nature of relations between state officials and the public, and between the state and the media? Fifth, what is the actual role of government – central, provincial and local? The course also discusses Chinese world views and how Chinese intellectuals think about China's role in shaping world order. In particular, it considers the most recent debates on the future of democratisation in China from the perspective of political culture and history. A range of cases of particular interest will be studied to meet the needs of students.

## **Democracy and Authoritarianism in Russia**

**Dr Paul Chaisty**

The course examines the re-birth of politics in Russia from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 to the present day. The topics we cover address the key questions that have dominated Russian politics over the last two decades. Why did the Russian Federation become a centre of opposition to the Soviet regime between 1989 and 1991? Has the post-Soviet political system established the foundations for genuine popular participation and political competition? Is Russia's 'superpresidentialism' a major institutional problem? Are post-Soviet political developments a consequence of institutional choices or Russian political culture? Are the government's economic reforms producing a market economy? Is Russia a 'Great Power'? Has democracy been derailed? Among the dominant themes running throughout the course will be the extent to which developments since the Soviet collapse reflect basic continuities in Russian politics as well as radical change. The impact of these developments on Russia's prospects for the future will also be considered.