

What is the problem with undemocratic countries like Iran having weapons of mass destruction when several of the leading democracies do, too?

This block of readings and class meetings will focus on the two major alternative regime types to democratic regimes and the question of whether non-democracies acquiring weapons of mass destruction is any more dangerous to the world than are the democracies and global non-democratic powers that already have them.

Some of our meetings will focus on the qualities that distinguish democratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian governments, asking why so many people continue to accept non-democratic rule. We also will examine day-to-day life in Iran and the structure of power in the Iranian regime to better understand how non-democracies work in the world today. The discussion seminar will examine how non-democratic regimes and democracies alike frequently fail to live up to their international obligations when it comes to weapons of mass destruction. In particular, I would like you to examine what threat Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons may—and may not—pose relative to the other global powers that continue to hold and strengthen their nuclear arsenals.

Focus questions to prepare for our discussion session: As you prepare for classes, please make sure to review the focus questions in the unit's study guide. Even if you are not writing a paper this particular topic, the discussion day's material is covered on exams, and you are expected to come to our discussion section having completed the block's readings and prepared to fully participate in our discussion.

Writing topic and directions: You will need to write only one more discussion topic paper after you have submitted your self-assessment essay. You will have several topics from which to choose, including this one.

This topic's writing prompt is:

Most Americans are concerned about Iran having nuclear weapons. What is the basis for our concerns about non-democracies—and especially Iran—developing nuclear weapons? To what extent is the United States adhering the international rules regarding nuclear weapons?

Note: Do not answer these questions one after another. Write an analytical essay that has a main argument that responds to the prompt's questions as a whole. Systematically develop and defend that argument using evidence from the week's readings.

If you write on this topic, your paper needs to be at least 1,500 words in length. Keep in mind as you answer this question that the main purpose of this assignment is for you to make a reasoned, well-defended (by the readings and specific evidence wherever possible) argument that engages class concepts and materials. **For you to do well on the paper, it needs to be clear that you have carefully reviewed the relevant assignment from the full week's reading on this topic** (i.e., not just the readings for the discussion day). Please **do not use any outside readings or other sources unless you specifically have cleared doing so** (i.e., you may not use the internet, unassigned authors, or any other student's work, to help you write the paper).

To be considered as having been submitted on time, do the following:

- (1) Email your paper as a PDF or MS Word or RTF attached document (if you send the document as an e-mail message, in pages format, or as a link to a cloud server document or drive—such as Google Docs/Drive—the paper will not be accepted until it submitted in one of the acceptable formats and late penalties will apply).
- (2) Send the email and attachment to: msetzler@highpoint.edu. Include a short note explaining what the attachment is.
- (3) Make sure the message's subject line is: PSC1010 paper 3.
- (4) Submit a hard copy of the paper at the start of class. Ideally, your paper will be stapled, but at a minimum, it should be paperclipped. Use double-spacing, and number your pages.

Before you begin writing, carefully review the grading assessment criteria for this assignment (the grading rubric for essay grading in lower division courses is on the course website, under the “Student Resources” tab).

You also should review carefully the course website handouts addressing citation expectations and the syllabus policies on “Academic dishonesty” and “Using artificial intelligence assistants, including ChatGPT and similar technologies.” I have elaborated a separate handout on the legitimate and effective use of AI resources in this class. You need to (re)read this document prior to starting any paper for this class:

<https://marksetzler.org/generalissues/AI.htm>

The paper's citations and bibliography must carefully follow one of three formats most used in the social sciences: University of Chicago, the APA, or the APSA. For your convenience, my website provides a handout with many formatting examples using the APSA style. You need to use page-specific citations so that your instructor can quickly verify your interpretation of cited material. Without exception, instances of plagiarism (see the syllabus statement) will be reported and punished according to university policy.

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