

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Spring 2017

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00-11:50

Political Science 202-01

Instructor

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Office Hours: 1-3 pm Monday and Wednesday or by appointment

Course Overview

The focus of this course is on how different political systems operate and why different systems produce different political outcomes. Alternative analytical and theoretical perspectives will be examined for their value in helping to understand and evaluate the historical development of political systems and why some political systems developed in certain locations but not in others.

Books, etc.

The core textbook for the class is:

Principles of Comparative Politics, 2nd Edition
William R. Clark, Matt Golder and Sona Nadenichek Golder
ISBN-13: 978-1608716791

Available at the bookstore or online

+ Other articles posted from time to time on Blackboard

Course Requirements/Grades

1. Online Quizzes. Each chapter of the text will have an associated online quiz that you will take on Blackboard asking questions relevant to the text. The tests are open book. The window for taking the quiz will close at the end of the last day on which the material is presented in class. *Quiz grades totals 20% of grade*
2. Current Events Posts. Before each Current Events Discussion day on the syllabus, you must post on Blackboard one post relevant to current events that includes material discussed in class (must be at least four sentences) and reply to another post (reply must be at least two sentences). *Posts and replies totals 10% of grade*

3. Mid-term Exam. The exam will be in-class and will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank and short essay questions. It will be closed note, closed book. *20% of grade*
4. Presentation. You will be asked to give a short presentation (2-3 mins) at the start of a class explaining an article that you selected representing the issue to be taught in that class that day. *5% of grade*
5. Final Paper. You will be given a list of 5 topics from chapters after the midterm to select from to write two 5 page responses. You should use all of the class material presented plus find other real-world examples to bolster your argument arguing for or against the proposition presented to you. The final paper should be approximately 10 pages in length (double spaced, 12 point font, normal margins), with 5 pages devoted to each answer. *25% of grade*
6. Constitution Project. The last two days of class time will be used to design and present a model constitution. It will be a group project in which you draft and present a constitution according to the characteristics of a hypothetical country that I provide. *10% of grade*
7. Attendance and participation. *10% of grade*

*Note on late papers: Papers are due at midnight (technically 11:59 pm) on the specified due date. I take off an automatic 5% for each hour the paper is late. I will set up an auto-reply email so you should receive a confirmation that your document has reached me. Please contact me immediately if you do not receive an auto-reply email.

If you email me at least 36 hours in advance of an assignment because something has come up, I am usually flexible. Only verified emergencies will get you an extension on any assignment within 36 hours of the due date.

Important Due Dates:

1. January 27 – Current Events Posts #1 Due
2. February 17 – Current Events Posts #2 Due
3. March 10 – Midterm Exam
4. March 22 – Current Events Posts #3 Due
5. April 14 – Current Events Posts #4 Due
6. May 1 – Final Paper Due

Course Procedures

The class is meant to be a fairly interactive class, despite the main part of each course period being devoted to lectures.

Generally, each class will start off with a presentation on the day's subject. We then will have some open discussion on the presented material and then move on to the main section of the day's lesson.

Relevant questions are encouraged during the lecture period and I will endeavor to break up many of the lecture days with group discussions or other activities.

Current Event Discussion days will be group discussion activities, then a report from the group back to class, then finally whole-class structured discussion.

Paying attention to the news will be very helpful during the class. While any major news site will have many articles about international political news, I find the following to be good quality free sites:

<http://www.cnn.com/world>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/>

<http://www.npr.org/sections/world/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world>

Course Outcomes

This course fulfills General Education requirement in Social & Behavioral Sciences. Social & Behavioral Sciences are concerned with understanding human behavior, human interactions, human environment, and the related social structures and forms. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Communicate an understanding of how social science knowledge is established and how and why it changes over time;

The course will not only focus on the content of different political systems but also use various frameworks and modes of thinking to evaluate evidence and track how these frames have changed over time and why.

Your progress in this area will be assessed with the following graded assignments: midterm examination and final paper.

2. Evaluate evidence and apply it to solving problems through social science methods;

After studying various political models, time period in each class will be devoted to testing and comparing the models in line with evidence from around the world as to how different government systems best explain observed outcomes.

Your progress in this area will be assessed with the following graded assignments: final paper, constitution project.

3. Communicate an understanding of a body of social science knowledge and its disciplinary perspective.

By the end of the class, the goal will be to understand institutional tradeoffs and variations in political behavior according to institutional choice. You will be asked through several different assignments to show that you can successfully communicate these differences and nuances.

Your progress in this area will be assessed with the following graded assignments: online quizzes, midterm exam, final exam.

Readings

January 9: No Class

January 11: Syllabus

January 13: Chapter 1 – Overview of Comparative Politics

January 16: No Class – MLK

Part I: What is Comparative Politics?

January 18: Chapter 2 – What is Social Science?

January 20: Chapter 3 – What is Politics?

Part II: Origins of Democracies and Dictatorships

January 23: Chapter 4 – Origins of the Modern State

January 25: Chapter 5 – How to Measure Regime Type

January 27: Current Events Discussion – *current events post #1 due*

January 30: Chapter 6 – Economic Determinants of Regime Type

February 1: Chapter 7 – Cultural Determinants of Regime Type

February 3: Film: The Square

February 6: Film: The Square

February 8: Discussion/Chapter 8 – Transitions to Democracy

Part III: Dictatorships

February 10: Chapter 10 (up to pg. 373) – Types of Authoritarian Regimes

February 13: Chapter 10 (finish) – How do Authoritarian Regimes Survive

February 15: Chapter 9 – Differences Between Authoritarian and Democratic Regimes

February 17: Current Events Discussion – *current events post #2 due*

February 20: No Class – President's Day

February 22: Chapter 12 (up to pg. 465) – Classifying Democracies

February 24: Chapter 12 (up to pg. 498) – Parliamentary Democracies

Part IV: Democratic Institutions

February 27: *No Class – instructor ill*

March 1: Chapter 12 (finish) – Presidential Democracies

March 3: Chapter 13 (up to pg. 563) – Majoritarian Electoral Systems

March 6: Chapter 13 (up to pg. 582) – Proportional Representation Systems

March 8: Review

March 10: Midterm Exam

March 13-17: No Class – Spring Break

March 20: Chapter 13 (finish) – Mixed Systems/Comparative Examples

March 22: Current Events Discussion – *current events post #3 due*

March 24: No Class – Training

March 27: Chapter 14 (up to pg. 620) – What Are Political Parties?

March 29: Chapter 14 (up to pg. 640) – The Role of Social Cleavages

March 31: Chapter 14 (finish) – Duverger's Theory

April 3: Chapter 15 (up to pg. 704) – Federalism and Bicameralism

April 5: Chapter 15 (finish) – Veto Players

April 7: No Class – Academic Conference

Part V: Consequences of Democratic Choices

April 10: Chapter 16 (up to pg. 765) – Impact of Institutional Choice

April 12: Chapter 16 (up to pg. 787) – Fiscal Policy and Institutional Choice

April 14: Current Events Discussion – *current events post #4 due*

April 17: Chapter 16 (finish) – Democratic Survival

April 19: Review

April 21: In-class Exercise: Constitution Project

April 24: In-class Exercise: Constitution Project

May 1: Final Paper Due (email to me by 11:59 pm)

Other Information

Statement on Diversity

I believe the classroom is a space where each student should be able to learn and be intellectually challenged without being singled out due to being different in some regard. We as students and instructors should aim to engage in lively and spirited debate and discussion while at the same time being respectful of each other's differences. It is these differences that enrich us as a University and should not be a source of division in the classroom or elsewhere.

The University of Louisville strives to foster and sustain an environment of inclusiveness that empowers us all to achieve our highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias.

We commit ourselves to building an exemplary educational community that offers a nurturing and challenging intellectual climate, a respect for the spectrum of human diversity, and a genuine understanding of the many differences-including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, national origin or military status-that enrich a vibrant metropolitan research university.

For more information, visit the [Office of Diversity](#).

Sexual Harassment

I believe that everyone should be able to participate in my class without the fear of sexual harassment, and I am committed to the university's policy. Additionally, certain behaviors are inappropriate even if they do not meet the technical criteria for harassment. Be respectful to each other.

The University of Louisville strives to maintain the campus free of all forms of illegal discrimination as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students. Sexual harassment is unacceptable and unlawful conduct and will not be tolerated in the workplace and the educational environment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems.

Students and Instructors are protected from Sexual Harassment according to the [Affirmative Action policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [UofL Computer Account Usage Agreement](#). Anyone experiencing Sexual Harassment should refer to the links above and/or contact the PEACC Program at 852.2663 and an advocate will explain your choices. This is a free and confidential service.

Anyone who would like to receive more information can contact a PEACC representative at 852.2663 and may use the educational modules provided by the [PEACC Program](#).

Title IX/Clery Act Notification

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain confidential support from the PEACC Program (852-

2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

For more information, see the [Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide](#)

Students with Disabilities

The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate and complete requirements for this class, notify me immediately and contact the Disability Resource Center (Stevenson Hall, 502.852.6938) for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution and its students and faculty.

For more information, visit the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (Sections 5. and 6.).

Religious Holy Days and Observances

Federal law and university policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief. It is the policy of the University of Louisville to accommodate students, faculty, and staff who observe religious work-restricted holy days.

If you require any special accommodation, please contact me in writing during the first two (2) weeks of term and alternative arrangements for any academic requirements will be provided.