

POLI 2053: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Section 03, Monday/Wednesday/Friday 12:30-1:20/ Tureaud 108

Spring 2014

Instructor: Leah Voisin

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Office Hours: Stubbs 233, F 11-12, 2-3:30

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of comparative politics. Understanding political systems and political action in countries around the world assists students in everyday understanding of their political environment as well as furthering their academic pursuits. As a **General Education** course, the design of this course is meant to develop skills associated with thinking, description, interpretation, and analysis of the world at large. These courses are also meant to promote a general ambition to extend learning into a lifelong endeavor. For more information concerning general education courses please refer to the LSU catalog.

Comparative politics concentrates on different elements that make different political systems in different countries. Both the elements (such as institutional or cultural considerations) as well as their effects on outcomes (such as the type of policy that these elements might produce) will be examined in this class. Thus, this course will rely on historical and current event awareness as well as comprehension of theoretical contributions from the field to frame this discussion. The student is expected to develop knowledge of comparative political systems and be able to analyze that political action within those systems critically (as any scholar within the field might also analyze the action). The ultimate goal of the class is twofold—to increase knowledge and understanding of the events which occur in other countries as well as understand how to critically examine such events (why might these events occur).

Textbook and Required Reading:

Barrington, Lowell. 2013. *Comparative Politics: Structures and Choices, 2nd Edition*. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. ISBN 978-1-111-34193-0

This text is available through the university bookstores as well as online. It is a required text and each student must acquire a copy. Additional required readings are either included in the syllabus schedule of required readings or will be given as an assignment in class at least the class before it is required.

Course Requirements:

Grades are based on the following breakdown:

Participation.....	8%
Quizzes.....	12%
Midterm.....	25%
Group Research Assignment.....	30%
Final Exam.....	25%

Details concerning the each are as follows and may be supplemented by further information through the course (in class or on Moodle):

Participation: Students will be expected to participate in class discussions, either voluntarily or when they are asked to participate. Comments should be thoughtful, reflect an understanding of the assigned readings, and be respectful of the others in the class. Participation, of course, requires presence. Thus, students should attend class regularly and be prepared to comment on assignments. It should be noted that extra credit is not likely to be assigned over the course of the semester, and eight percent can most certainly mean the difference between one grade and the next. Although the student is not tested on knowledge of current events, it may be useful to bring questions and comments concerning these events to class. The thoughts and comments of fellow classmates and the instructor can aid in developing informed opinions about these happenings as well as assist the student in developing ideas for the research project. **Also note that class discussion may be included on the exams. It is not the instructor's responsibility to provide notes or outside explanation to students who are not regularly attending class.**

Quizzes: Over the course of the semester, several oral quizzes will be administered randomly to test the comprehension of required reading assignments. Students must be present in class to take the quiz, **and no make-up quizzes will be given to a student when they have missed the quiz.** The five highest quiz grades will be considered in the final quiz grade. (This does not excuse frequent absences. At least eight quizzes will be given.)

Midterm/First Exam and Final Exams: Exams will be given during their designated times, as is detailed in the syllabus schedule. The material covered in these exams will include material from class lectures, discussions, and readings. The parameters for each will be discussed in class a week before the exam is administered. The format of the exams may include multiple choice style questions as well as essay and/or short answer questions. This format should be considered when studying for these exams. Make-up midterm exams will only be given with instructor approval on the last day of class. No make-ups will be given for the final unless authorized by the dean. Otherwise, missed exams will be counted as a zero toward the final grade.

Group Research Assignment: This assignment will consist of two parts. The first part is a paper. This paper will be approximately 10 to 13 pages in length before the references list. Papers should be written in a consistent style and must be coherent, well-organized, grammatically correct, and cited. Each group will be assigned two countries. The paper will include a profile of the two countries, and a research element that involves investigating policy within the country. Any further instruction concerning the parameters of the paper will be addressed in an additional handout. The second part is a group presentation of the information discussed in the paper. This assignment is designed to allow the students to more thoroughly investigate a country of interest and use the information discussed throughout the class to examine current politics. To prepare for this assignment, students should be attentive to interesting international events in the last

few years. Late assignments will be lowered one letter grade per day (not class period) late.

Grading Scale:

A: 90%-100%; B: 80%-89.9%; C: 70%-79.9%; D: 60%-69.9%; F: 0-59.9%

Policies:

It is important for the members of the class to understand the following policies:

Attendance: As is discussed in the descriptions of the course requirements, attendance is important for the following reasons: participation is calculated as part of the final grade and may be useful when completing assignments and quizzes are randomly given throughout the semester. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class, and **if a quiz is missed because of tardiness, the student must consider this a missed quiz.**

Office Hours: Because of other duties that I may have within the department, I am generally in my office at some point most weekdays. If you have any questions, please feel free to visit during my office hours or between hours in my office if I am in my office, but note that if another student has arrived before you, please be patient. I am also available through email. If you choose to contact me through email, please allow at least a day for a response before attempting to contact me again.

Changes to the Syllabus: I reserve the right to change the syllabus anytime during the semester. This includes the assignment schedule as well as any requirements or policies.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated in any form. Those students found to be in violation of the LSU Student Code of Conduct will be reported and from this point, the situation will no longer be in my hands. Ignorance of policy is not an excuse for non-compliance. The LSU Code of Conduct is available online. Academic dishonesty includes working as a group when such group work is not authorized. It also includes improperly citing material that is not original. As a personal note, an earned C or D is better than an F and the possibility of ending your studies at LSU. If you have any questions, please see me.

Cell Phones and Personal Computers: Cell phones must be turned on silent or off. If vibrating cell phones become distracting, you will be asked to turn them completely off. Personal computers should be used to take notes. They should not be used for any other purpose unless it is approved by the instructor. **If I find them distracting to either you or those around you, I will ask you to turn in typed notes as a part of the quiz grade in addition to the five graded quizzes. If you are not participating regularly in class discussion and are using a personal computer, I may also ask you to turn in typed notes as a quiz grade.**

Disabilities: Students with disabilities who are working with the Office of Disabilities Services will be accommodated to the best of my abilities. Please inform me of needs as soon as possible.

Schedule:

Date	General Topic	Reading Assignment and Other Activities
Jan. 15	Introduction to Course	Review Syllabus and Discuss Expectations
Jan. 17	Introduction to Comparative Politics	*Chapter 1
Jan. 20	Holiday	No Class
Jan. 22	History of Comparative Politics	** Gerardo L. Munck. 2007. "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics." <u>Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics</u> Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Jan. 24	Weather Issue	
Jan. 27	Focus on the State	** Stephen D. Krasner. 1984. "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics." <u>Comparative Politics</u> . 23 (2): 223-246.
Jan. 29	Weather Issue	
Jan. 31	Political Systems	*Chapter 5
Feb. 3	Political Systems/ Legislatures and Executives	*Chapter 5 *Chapter 6-Research Assignment Discussed
Feb. 5	Legislatures and Executives/ Unelected Components of Government	*Chapter 6 *Chapter 7
Feb. 7	Unelected Components of Government	*Chapter 7
Feb. 10	Political Participation	*Chapter 8
Feb. 12	Political Participation	*Chapter 8
Feb. 14	Political Parties and Electoral Systems	*Chapter 9
Feb. 17	Political Parties and Electoral Systems	*Chapter 9
Feb. 19	Leadership	*Chapter 10
Feb. 21	Leadership	*Chapter 10
Feb. 22	Make-up Day	Make-up Day
Feb. 24	Focus on Non-democracy	**Brooker, Paul. 2000. "Theories of Non-Democratic Government." <u>Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government, and Politics</u> . Paul Brooker. New York: St. Martin's Press.
Feb. 26	Focus on Non-democracy	**Diamond, Larry. 2002. "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes." <u>Journal of Democracy</u> . 12(2): 21-35. **Fish, M. Steven. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." <u>World Politics</u> . 55: 4-37.
Feb. 28		Midterm-Exam 1
Mar. 3	No Class	Mardi Gras

Mar. 5	Make up day	Make up day
Mar. 7	Midterm-Exam 1	
Mar. 10	Comparative Public Policy	*Chapter 12
Mar. 12	Economic Class, Development, Systems, and Globalization	*Chapter 2
Mar. 14	Group Work	Group Work
Mar. 17	Economic Class, Development Systems, and Globalization	*Chapter 2
Mar. 19	Economics and Political Development	**Reading from: Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party.</i> **Reading from: Smith, Adam. <i>An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.</i>
Mar. 21	Political Culture and Ideology	*Chapter 3
Mar. 24	Political Culture and Ideology	*Chapter 3
Mar. 26	Importance of Political Culture	****Reading from: Inglehart, Ronald. 1997. <i>Modernization and Postmodernization.</i> Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.
Mar. 28	Identity Structure	*Chapter 4
Mar. 29	Make-up Day	Make-up Day
Mar. 31	Identity Structure	*Chapter 4
Apr. 2	Regime Transition	*Chapter 11
Apr. 4	Regime Transition	*Chapter 11
Apr. 7	Revolution	**Summary of or Reading from: Huntington, Samuel. <i>Political Order in Changing Societies.</i> New Haven, CT: Yale UP. **Summary of or Reading from: Gurr, Ted Robert. 1970. <i>Why Men Rebel.</i> Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP. **Summary of or Reading from: Lichbach, Mark. <i>The Rebel's Dilemma.</i>
Apr. 9	Revolution	** Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2001. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." <i>World Bank Policy Research Working Paper no. WPS 2355.</i> **Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. <i>American Political Science Review.</i> 97(1): 75-90.
Apr. 11	Alternative Views	**Reading from: Scott, James C. 1976. <i>The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia.</i> New Haven, CT: Yale UP.
Apr. 14	No Class	Spring Break
Apr. 16	No Class	Spring Break
Apr. 18	No Class	Spring Break
Apr. 21	Film Day	Research Assignments Due
Apr. 23	Class Presentation	Presentation of Research Assignments

Apr. 25	Class Presentation	Presentation of Research Assignments
Apr. 28	Class Presentations	Presentation of Research Assignments and Discussion of Research Presented
Apr. 30	Wrap-up	*Epilogue
May 2	Make-Ups and Questions	Make-Up Exams and Questions Concerning the Final
May 8	10-noon/ Final Exam	Final Exam

* Barrington, Lowell. 2013. *Comparative Politics: Structures and Choices, 2nd Edition*. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

**These readings will be available on Moodle or through the libraries indexes and databases. The bibliographical information will be emailed at least three days before the readings are due to be discussed.