

PSC 211
Comparative Government and Politics
Fall 2008
TR 08:30 AM-09:45 AM
BEH 107

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Course Description

Comparative politics is one of the broadest fields of political science. In this field, one addresses issues related to, for example, political institutions, political culture, political economy, and political development in countries across the world. Although some associate comparative politics with “the comparative method,” those conducting research in the area of comparative politics use a multitude of methodologies and pursue diverse topics. In this course, students will gain an understanding of some of the basic concepts and tools employed in comparative politics. Students will learn about some of the contemporary topics in comparative politics such as political institutions, political development and democratization. In addition, students will become familiar with the political systems and issues of specific countries.

Course Requirements

Required Texts and Reading:

James N. Danziger. 2008. *Understanding the Political World*. Ninth Edition. Pearson Longman.

Jeffrey Kopstein and Mark Lichbach. 2005. *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order*. Cambridge University Press.

Reserve Readings (electronic): I will designate reserve readings with an **R** in the list of readings. The web site is: <http://ereserves.library.unlv.edu/eres/default.aspx> The readings are listed in alphabetical order by title.

Handouts

Grades

The total number of points that can be achieved in this course is 400. The points are allocated in the following way:

	Number of Points	Percentage Equivalent
Quizzes	100	25%
Mid term	120	30%
Attendance	20	5%
Participation	20	5%
Final Exam	140	35%
Totals	400	100%

In other words, quizzes count for 25% of your grade, the mid term for 30%, attendance for 5%, participation for 5%, and the final examination for 35%.

According to the point system, final grades will be assigned in the following way:

A	374 points to 400 points
A-	358 points to 373 points
B+	346 points to 357points
B	330 points to 345 points
B-	318 points to 329 points
C+	306 points to 317 points
C	290 points to 305 points
C-	278 points to 289 points
D+	266 points to 277 points
D	250 points to 265 points
D-	238 points to 249 points
F	237 points and below

Exams

Make-up exams will not be given except in the case of extreme circumstances. The student must be able provide documentation that the absence is for a reason recognized by the university (e.g., illness, death in the family, observance of a religious holiday) and make arrangements with me **prior** to the scheduled exam date. If it is absolutely impossible to make prior arrangements with me, students must contact me as soon as possible about the situation. Please notify me of any planned absences for religious holidays or official extracurricular activity for UNLV by September 11, 2008.

Quizzes

Four quizzes will be administered during the course. **The quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class.** Students may drop their lowest quiz score. Since the lowest quiz score can be dropped and students know in advance the dates of the quizzes, **no makeup quizzes will be administered.**

Quizzes and exams will be based on material covered during class in lectures, films or class discussions and from the required readings. I will periodically introduce current event articles or materials as they relate to the topics and concepts being covered in class. Students will, of course, be responsible for this material as well as material covered in films and guest lectures.

Attendance, Participation and General Expectations

Attendance will be taken each class. Students may miss up to three classes without losing attendance points. Because students are already allowed three absences during the term, three points will be subtracted from the attendance points for every absence beyond three, whatever the reason for the absence. Attending class is a very important part of the learning process. If anyone foresees the possibility of missing class more than three times, she/he should consider taking PSC 211 when she/he will be able to attend all of the classes. **Signing the attendance sheet for another student is a form of fraud**, and anyone participating in this activity will be penalized.

Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged. Of course, participation should be constructive, and all comments should be relevant to the material being covered in class. Students must **do all of the reading!** I will call on students in class and expect their answers to reflect familiarity with the ideas and information in the readings. Respect should be shown for all other class members at all times. Inappropriate and disruptive participation/behavior will result in a drop in the student's grade and perhaps even expulsion from the class. If you are habitually late, the attendance portion of your course grade will be marked down substantially.

Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive promptly and have a collegial demeanor. Students are not allowed to sleep, read newspapers, listen to headphones, or talk to others during class. Engaging in these behaviors will result in a drop in the student's grade and perhaps even expulsion from the class. Arriving late, leaving early, or interrupting class with a cell phone or other electronic device will also result in a drop in the student's grade. **You must turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices during class. Any exceptions must be cleared with me in advance. If you look at your cell phone during a quiz or exam, you will receive a zero for that quiz or exam. Students are not allowed to tape record, photograph, video tape or otherwise electronically record any of the class.**

I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus. Students will be responsible for knowing any changes made to the syllabus during class time whether they were in attendance or not. The instructor's lecture notes are not available to students; it is the student's responsibility to obtain class notes from a classmate, should class be missed.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan.

UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: Voice (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, fax (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

Academic Honesty: Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: “Using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources.” See the “Student Academic Misconduct Policy” (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>

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Date	
Week 1	
Tuesday, 8/26	Class Introduction: Read the Syllabus Carefully!
Thursday, 8/28	Comparative Politics: Concepts, Topics and Methods Danzinger, Chapter 1 R: Collier, David. “The Comparative Method.” In Ada W. Finifter (ed.). <i>Political Science: The State of the Discipline II</i> . Washington, DC: American Political Science Association.
Week 2	
Tuesday, 9/2	Democracy and Regime Types Danzinger pp. 163-182 R: Schmitter, Philippe and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy Is and Is Not.”
	Political Culture
Thursday, 9/4	Political Beliefs and Ideology Danzinger, Chapter 2
Week 3	
Tuesday, 9/9	Political Behavior Danzinger, Chapter 3
Thursday, 9/11	Political Socialization Danzinger, Chapter 4
Week 4	
Tuesday, 9/16	Quiz 1 Civil Society and Social Capital R: Putnam, Robert. 1995. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 6(1): 65-78.
	Political Institutions
Thursday, 9/18	Political Institutions: Introduction Danzinger, Chapter 6 and pp. 182-184
Week 5	
Tuesday, 9/23	Parliamentary versus Presidential Regimes R: Lijphart, Chapter 7, “Executive-Legislative Relations: Patterns of Dominance and Balance of Power.” Danzinger, pp. 185-193.
Thursday, 9/25	Electoral Systems R: Lijphart, Chapter 8, “Electoral Systems: Majority and Plurality Methods Versus Proportional Representation.”
Week 6	
Tuesday, 9/30	Catch Up Day

Thursday, 10/2	Quiz 2 Political Party Systems R: Lijphart, Chapter 5, "Party Systems: Two Party and Multiparty Systems." Danzinger, p. 190 and pp. 193-201.
Week 7	
Tuesday, 10/7	Review for the Midterm Examination
Thursday, 10/9	Midterm Examination
Week 8	
Tuesday, 10/14	Political Economy Danzinger, Chapter 8
Thursday, 10/16	Economic and Political Development I Danzinger, Chapter 10
Week 9	
Tuesday, 10/21	Economic and Political Development II Danzinger, Chapter 14
Thursday, 10/23	Catch Up Day
Week 10	
Tuesday, 10/28	Ethnicity and Politics R: Taras, Ray and Rajat Ganguly. 2002. "Ethnic Conflict on the World Stage." Chapter One in <i>Understanding Ethnic Conflict: The International Dimension</i>
Thursday, 10/30	Ethnicity and Politics (cont.)
Week 11	
Tuesday, 11/4	Constitution Building Exercise
Thursday, 11	Quiz 3 Case Study: France Kopstein and Lichbach, Chapter 4
Week 12	
Tuesday, 11/11	Veteran's Day Recess
Thursday, 11/13	Case Study: United Kingdom Kopstein and Lichbach, Chapter 3
Week 13	
Tuesday, 11/18	Case Study: Japan Kopstein and Lichbach, Chapter 6
Thursday, 11/20	Case Study: Mexico Kopstein and Lichbach, Chapter 9
Week 14	
Tuesday, 11/25	Case Study: South Africa Kopstein and Lichbach, Chapter 12
Thursday, 11/27	Thanksgiving Recess
Week 15	
Tuesday, 12/2	Quiz 4 Case Study: Russia Kopstein and Lichbach, Chapter 7
Thursday, 12/4	Review for the Final Exam
Week 16	
Thursday December 11 8:00 AM	FINAL EXAMINATION

