

PSC 211
Comparative Government and Politics
Spring 2009
TR08:30 AM-09:45 TBE B176

Part-time instructor: Dr. Peter J. Pizor
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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. 2009. *Understanding the Political World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science*. Ninth Edition. Pearson Longman.

Items on reserve in the library. These are marked **R (Please note: where possible reserve items will be posted on the web site)**

Handouts: These will be posted on Web Campus.

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

The exams will consist of a mix of short answer and essay questions. **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 January 30, 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. 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. Engaging in these behaviors will result in a drop in the student's grade and perhaps even expulsion from the class. **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>>). All breaches in academic honesty will be handled in accordance with the UNLV Student Conduct Code and Policies.

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Date	
Week 1	
Monday,	Class Introduction: Read the Syllabus Carefully!
Wednesday	<p><i>What is comparative politics?</i></p> <p>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.</p>
Week 2	
Monday,	<p><i>How do comparative political scientists practice their craft?</i></p> <p>R: Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method Arend Lijphart, <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Sep., 1971), pp. 682-693</p>
Wednesday,	<p><i>Are there common developmental paths?</i></p> <p>See Development Paths on the course web site.</p>
Week 3	
Monday,	<p><i>What is democracy and how does it arise?</i></p> <p>Danzinger pp. 169-188 R: Schmitter, Philippe and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is and Is Not." R: Robert Dahl, "Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition" R: Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value"</p>
	Political Culture
Wednesday,	<p><i>What is political culture? How does political culture shape behavior?</i></p> <p>Political Beliefs and Ideology Danzinger, Chapter 2 R: Amartya Sen "The Importance of Democracy" Robert J. R. Ross and Anita Chan, "From North-South and South-South".</p>
Week 4	
Monday,	<p><i>What are the elements that influence political behavior?</i></p> <p>Danzinger, Chapter 3</p>
Wednesday,	<p><i>What are the key agents of political socialization and how do they vary?</i></p> <p>Danzinger, Chapter 4 R: Seyla Benhabib, "The Claims of Culture" Harold Wilensky, "Migration and Politics: Explaining Variation Among Rich Democracies in Recent Nativist Protests." Vali Nasr, "Lessons from the Muslim World"</p>
Week 5	
Monday,	Quiz 1

	<p><i>What are the components of a political system? How do institutions differ among different levels of political systems?</i></p> <p>R: Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems Christopher J. Anderson, Christine A. Guillory <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, Vol. 91, No. 1 (Mar., 1997), pp. 66-81</p>
	Political Institutions
Wednesday,	<p><i>How and why do legislatures, executives, and judicial institutions vary?</i></p> <p>Political Institutions: Introduction Danzinger, Chapter 6 and pp. 188-191</p>
Week 6	
Monday,	<p><i>Looking more closely: what are the differences between Parliamentary and Presidential Regimes?</i></p> <p>R: Lijphart, Chapter 7, "Executive-Legislative Relations: Patterns of Dominance and Balance of Power." Danzinger, pp. 191-197</p>
Wednesday,	<p><i>How do variations in electoral systems affect politics?</i></p> <p>R: Lijphart, Chapter 8, "Electoral Systems: Majority and Plurality Methods Versus Proportional Representation." Benjamin Reilly, "Electoral Systems for Divided Societies."</p>
Week 7	
Monday,	Quiz 2 Catch Up Day
Wednesday,	<p><i>What are party systems and how do they change the nature of politics?</i></p> <p>R: Lijphart, Chapter 5, "Party Systems: Two Party and Multiparty Systems." Danzinger, pp. 197-205</p>
Week 8	
Monday,	Review for the Midterm Examination
Wednesday,	Midterm Examination
Week 9	
Monday,	<p><i>How does political economy shape politics? What are the differences between market economies, command economies, and mixed economies?</i></p> <p>Danzinger, Chapter 8</p>
Wednesday,	<p><i>How does the process of development shape political systems?</i></p> <p>Danzinger, Chapter 10</p>
Week 10	

Monday,	<i>How does competition between states influence political systems?</i> Danzinger, Chapter 14
Wednesday,	Quiz 3 <i>How does ethnicity impact political systems?</i> R: Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a ..." "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War:", Fearon, J., and Laitin, D. <i>American Political Science Review</i> (2003), 97: 75-90
Week 11	
Monday,	Catch up
Wednesday,	<i>What are the most common types of political violence? To what extent are the causal factors understood?</i> Danziger, Chapter 12.
Week 12	
Monday,	<i>What can you learn from a specific case study?</i> Hand Out on line
Wednesday,	Case Study: France Hand Out on line
Week 13	
Monday,	Case Study: United Kingdom Hand Out on line
Wednesday,	Case Study: Japan Hand Out on line
Week 14	
Monday,	Case Study: Mexico Hand Out on line
Wednesday,	Quiz 4 Case Study: South Africa Hand Out on line
Week 15	
Monday,	Case Study: China Hand Out on line
Wednesday,	Review for the Final Exam
Week 16	
	FINAL EXAMINATION