INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

POL 102B
Summer 2013
MTWRF: 3:00 to 4:45

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 to 2:30 and by appointment

Comparative politics is one of the major subfields in the discipline of political science. It focuses on examining phenomena such as elections, parliamentary behavior, and social conflict across countries. This course will provide students with an overview of the world’s political and governmental systems, as well as the methods political scientists use to analyze politics comparatively. Though we in the U.S. often think of government as a system in which political power is divided among three institutions – a President, a legislature, and the courts – this is not the case in many countries in the world today. In fact, there exists a great diversity of governmental institutions, which may lead to differing policy outcomes as well as differences in the way that citizens view government.

The first half of the course is spent on understanding the core concepts and theories in comparative politics. The different topics include approaches to comparative politics, the state, democracy, democratization and political transitions. The second half of the course focuses on political institutions. Among the topics to be discussed are: (1) differences in electoral systems, where the discussion will focus on majoritarian, proportional, and mixed systems; (2) differences in forms of government, primarily those between parliamentary, presidential, and mixed forms of government; and (3) judicial and court systems, focusing on the role of courts in political systems.

Course Textbook
The main textbook we will use is: Daniele Caramani, 2008, Comparative Politics. 1st ed. Oxford University Press. For case studies, we will use Cases in Comparative Politics by Patrick O’Neill, Karl Fields and Don Share, 2013, 4th ed. Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Course Site
The course site is hosted on Blackboard (bb.wustl.edu). Log on to find additional readings and other course-related materials. All non-course book readings will be available on Blackboard.
1. **Class Participation**
You should attend class every day. Attending class is particularly important in this compressed course. Ten (10) percent of your overall grade will be determined by your attendance and participation in class. A good participation grade requires you to actively participate in our discussions. I expect students to come to class having read the assigned material and being prepared to discuss it.

2. **Quizzes**
There will be three quizzes throughout the course. The goal of these quizzes is to tie together the week’s topics and help students focus on key concepts and terms. Each quiz is worth five (5) percent of your overall grade.

3. **News Reports**
In order to connect the theories and concepts covered in the course to real world events, students will be asked to find and briefly present a news article related to the day’s topic. Each student will be assigned one day each week to use a reputable news source to find an article related to that day’s topics. Students will then informally present their article and the class will discuss how it connects to class topics.

4. **Tests**
There will be one Midterm Exam and one Final Exam. The midterm is worth 25 percent of your overall grade; the final exam is worth 40 percent of your total grade.

   The Midterm Exam will be on Friday, July 26th.
   The Final Exam will take place on Friday, August 15th.

**Policy on late and/or incomplete work**
As a general rule I do not accept late work. If you foresee a problem with completing or turning in any assignments, please let me know right away.

**Grading**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Reports</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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**Special Accommodations**
If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated,
please inform me immediately privately after class or at my office (Seigle 254). To request academic accommodations, students must contact Cornerstone (http://disability.wustl.edu).

**Academic Integrity & Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. In this class, such a breach results in failing the course. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other potential form of cheating, consult the course instructor. If you are unfamiliar with standards regarding plagiarism, a good place to start is: http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html.

If you have any questions about the course policies, expectations, assignments, etc., please feel free to talk with me. The syllabus can be amended as the need arises. Any changes will be posted on Blackboard, emailed to the class, and announced in class.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1: Introductory Concepts and Approaches**

**7/15: Introduction**

No reading assigned.

**7/16: Analytical Thinking, Part 1: What is Comparative Politics?**

Reading:
- Caramani, Introduction to Comparative Politics.
- O’Neil, Ch.1: Introduction

**7/17: Analytical Thinking, Part 2: Methods and Research**

Reading:
- Caramani, Ch. 3

**7/18: Approaches to Comparative Politics**

Reading:
- Caramani, Ch. 2, skim Ch. 1

**7/19: Approaches: Rational Choice and Game Theory**

Quiz #1
Reading: Geddes, pgs. 175-192

**Week 2: Democracies and Autocracies**
7/22: Defining Democracy
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 5
   Schmitter and Karl, “What Democracy is ... and is Not”

7/23: Authoritarianism
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 6

7/24: Democratization and Transitions
Reading:
   O’Neill, Ch. 5 pgs. 131-135 and Ch. 9
   Linz and Stepan 1996, Ch. 1

7/25: Consequences of Democracy: Political Economy and The Welfare State
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 21
   O’Neill, Ch. 4

7/26: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 3: Democratic Institutions

7/29: Legislatures
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 7

7/30: Executives and Forms of Government
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 8
   O’Neill, Ch. 5 pgs. 140-146

7/31: Courts
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 9
   Vanberg, “Establishing Judicial Independence in West Germany”

8/1: Elections and Electoral Systems
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 10

8/2: Political Parties and Party Systems I
Quiz #2
Reading:
   Caramani, Ch. 12
The Economist, “Euroscepticism in Germany: Silent No More”

**Week 4: Democratic Institutions, cont’d.**

8/5: Political Parties and Party Systems II  
Reading:  
Caramani, Ch. 13

8/6: Interactions between Institutions  
No reading assigned

8/7: Case Study #1: United Kingdom  
Reading:  
O’Neill et al, Ch. 2

8/8: Case Study #2: Germany  
Reading:  
O’Neill et al, Ch 5

8/9: Case Study #3: France  
Quiz #3  
Reading:  
O’Neill et al, Ch. 4

**Week 5: Case Studies**

8/12: Case Study #4: China  
Reading:  
O’Neill et al, Ch. 8

8/13: Case Study #5: Russia  
Reading:  
O’Neill et al, Ch.7

8/14: Review for Final Exam

8/15: FINAL EXAM