

University of Illinois at Chicago
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Political Science 130
Fall 2006

Instructor: Professor Ola Adeoye
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Lecture: M/W: 2:00 to 2:50 p.m.

Office: 1170A BSB
Office Hours: M/W 3 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: 304 Barnum Hall

Teaching Assistant: Andrada Costoiu
Phone: 312-355-3261
Discussion 13281 – Fri - 11 - 11:50 a.m. - 281 BSB
Discussion 13282 – Fri - 12 – 12:50 p.m. - 285 BSB

Office: 1109 BSB
Office Hours: Fri – 10 – 11 a.m.

Course Description

Welcome to comparative politics - the methodical study of individual countries. Every country, including the United States, has a story to tell about its colonial legacy, political history and development, democratic institutions, form of governance, public policy process, economy, demographics, political and social culture, and position in the world. Our mission in this course is to understand the similarities and differences that exist among countries in the world.

We begin with a general overview of comparative politics within historical and contemporary contexts. We then consider the theoretical approaches and analytical methods used in the subfield and the broader political science field. The bulk of our time, however, will be spent case studying countries grouped into three distinct categories, starting with solid democracies. This is followed by transitional democracies. Finally, we deal with authoritarian governments.

Importantly, we will explore what makes some countries democratic exemplars and economic powerhouses and others basket cases. We will also learn how certain countries have transformed over time and what explains this transformation. In doing so, we will rely on information from varied sources. The goal is for students to broaden their global perspectives and develop a capacity for independent thought.

Reading

Kesselman, Mark, Joel Krieger, and William A. Joseph. 2007. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

As you note above, there is only one text assigned for this course. Supplemental information will be given where necessary at lectures, class discussions and in handouts

Method of Instruction

This course will be taught through lecture and class discussion. The instructor provides the lecture, based on his knowledge, ideas and thoughts. Class discussion supplements

the instructor's effort. Here the TA breaks down the lecture in a way that allows feedback and facilitates contribution from the students. The TA may give quizzes/assignments in addition to published rubrics where she finds them necessary and apply them to the participation grade. Audio-visual and other instructional aid (i.e., overhead projector, maps, videos, etc) will be utilized from time to time at lecture or discussion where helpful.

Course Requirements

Performance in this course will be based on the following:

1. Attendance/Participation. Attendance at both lecture and class discussion is mandatory. Random attendance may be taken at lecture and your TA will track the number of times you missed class discussion. Both will be taken into consideration when calculating your final grade.
2. As for participation, beginning the second week, you will submit a prior (Deadline: Sunday, 6:00 p.m.) online version of a short (1-page) reaction to the week's reading to my email address (oadeoy1@uic.edu) and come to class discussion with a hard copy to guide your contribution. In it you will highlight the main points of the reading and how they help you understand comparative politics. Participation will also be determined by your verbal contribution to the discussion and general attitude toward the course.
3. Midterms. There will be TWO midterm examinations intended to test your grasp of the subject. Each exam will draw from the text, lectures, class discussions, and handouts. Both exams will be taken in your discussion section.
4. Research paper. The ultimate goal of this course is for you to appreciate countries of the world by their individual elements. To this end, you will write a 7-10 page paper comparing TWO countries selected NOT from those covered in the text (there are nearly 200 countries in the world!). Your paper has two parts. First, you will profile these countries by their political history. Second, you will compare their recent political, economic and socio-demographic transformations and how they have affected a public policy area, such as the healthcare system, education system, judicial system, women development, administrative structure or globalization efforts. The conclusion from your research should place these countries within a label in the text (i.e., consolidated democracy, transitional democracy or authoritarian regime). Be warned: cutting corners by relying wholly on the internet for information will be penalized. You are encouraged to seek information from varied sources including newspapers, journals, documentaries, etc. Substandard English will similarly set you back in points. Most computers these days have grammar and spell-check function: find and use them! Before you embark on this project you will submit for approval to your TA the countries you have chosen. Further details on this assignment will be provided at lecture and class discussion.

Grade Composition

Attendance	= 10 percent
Participation	= 20 percent
Midterm Exam (1)	= 20 percent
Midterm Exam (2)	= 20 percent

Research Paper = 30 percent

Grading Scale

Based on weighted scores in the above rubrics, the final grade will be determined as follows:

A = 93 – 100 percent

B = 83 – 92 percent

C = 75 – 82 percent

D = 65 – 74 percent

F = Below 65 percent

General Policy

On Attendance:

For the goal of this course to be realized, you need to be here and on time. I consider habitual late-coming disrespectful and it tells me you are not serious about the course. Academic accommodations will be given to students with documented disabilities, per university regulations. Such students should inform their TA of their condition early in the semester. Medical emergencies must be validated by an MD.

On Assignments:

Assignments are due on deadlines. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized accordingly. No exceptions.

On Academic Dishonesty:

A word of caution: Don't plagiarize or use a surrogate to do your work. Great variance between the skills shown in class and those displayed in take-home assignments will trigger an investigation that may lead to serious consequences for the student.

On Class Decorum:

Cell phones, pagers and related gadgets capable of setting off and distracting the class must be completely turned off before you enter the class. While a cup of coffee or a bottle of soda may be allowed, chewable items (including gum) are forbidden.

On Course Information:

This syllabus is your primary source of written information for the course; consult it regularly. If you lose the copy given to you in class ask your TA for a replacement or print one online.

Course Outline & Calendar

Note: This calendar does not demarcate specific topics for each class meeting. Topics will be covered cumulatively; that is, we will pick up from where we left off the previous meeting.

Week One

8/28 – Introduction and Course Overview. What is Comparative Politics? What are we comparing? Why study it? Explanation of key words and concepts

Read Chapter 1, Sections 1 & 2

Week Two**9/4 – Monday – Labor Day break- No Class**

9/6 - Themes, concepts & analytical framework for studying comparative politics

Read Chapter 1, Section 3

Week Three

9/11 – Need for government; Roles and functions of government; Political systems – types and logic of classification (1st, 2nd and 3rd Worlds v. Consolidated democracies, Transitional democracies and Authoritarian regimes); Comparative political ideologies (Democracy, Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism, Marxism, Communism, Liberalism, Conservatism, Fascism, Anarchism, Islamic fundamentalism, etc).

Read Chapter 1, Section 4

Week Four

9/18 – Consolidated Democracies – Britain

Week Five

9/25 – Consolidated Democracies – France

9/29 – Friday – Midterm Exam 1 (in discussion section)**Week Six**

10/2 – Consolidated Democracies – Germany

Week Seven

10/9 – Consolidated Democracies – Japan

Week Eight

10/16 – Consolidated Democracies – India

Week Nine

10/23 - Consolidated Democracies – the United States

Week Ten

10/30 - Transitional Democracies – Russia

Week Eleven

11/6 - Transitional Democracies – Brazil

11/10 – Friday – Midterm 11 (in discussion section)**Week Twelve**

11/13 – Transitional Democracies – Mexico

Week Thirteen

11/20 – Transitional Democracies – Nigeria

11/24 – Friday – No class/discussion – Thanksgiving break

Week Fourteen

11/27 – Authoritarian Regimes – Iran

12/1 – Friday - Deadline for final research paper proposal

Week Fifteen

12/4 – Authoritarian Regimes – China

12/11 – Monday – Final paper due in your TA's mailbox or at other place designated