PSC13 Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Course Description
This course introduces students to the discipline of comparative politics, a subfield in political science. Students of comparative politics study politics in countries around the world. Our course will focus on several important themes in the subfield including the science and the art of comparative politics, ideology and culture, political development, democracy and democratization, and the political economy of development. The approach in the class will be global in three senses of the term: 1) it provides broad coverage with select cases in Europe, Asia, North and South America, the Middle East, and Africa, 2) it offers conceptual comprehensiveness, and 3) it promotes critical thinking.

Learning Objectives:
The general objective of this course is to increase the students knowledge of political realities all over the world. Students will learn the many ways governments operate and the various ways people behave in political life. By the end of the term students should be able to:

- accurately describe political life in select countries in all of the world’s geographic regions;
- show a familiarity with a wide range of substantive issues in comparative politics and be able to discuss them critically;
- demonstrate mastery of the main theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of comparative politics.

Required Text

- Other texts will be available as electronic files

Course Hours
The course has 26 class sessions in total. Each class session is 90 minutes in length. The course meets from Monday to Thursday, and two additional class sessions on the third Friday (July 20) and the sixth Friday (August 10).

Grading Policy
Course grades are based on a midterm (40%) and a final examination (60%). These exams consist of questions requiring both short answers and longer essays. Attendance is required; participation in class discussion is expected, including leading class discussion on one or more journal articles during the semester.
**Course Schedules**

Lectures and assigned readings are both complementary and supplementary; neither is a complete substitute for the other. Pages from the text should be read prior to the lecture for which they are assigned. We move through a lot of material quickly, so keep up.

**Concepts and Critical Thinking**

July 2  
**Introduction and Overview**

July 3  
**Comparative Politics: What is it? Why Study it?**

Kesselmen et al., Chapter 1 (Introducing Comparative Politics)

July 4  
**Critical Thinking about Politics: Analytical Techniques of Political Science**

Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method.”  


Douglas Dion, “Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study.”  

Review Symposium: “The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation: King, Keohane, and Verba,” contributions by Caporaso, Collier, Laitin, Rogowski, Tarrow and rejoinders,  

July 5  
**Power**


Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics.”  


July 5  
**States and Nations**


July 9  

**Democracy: What is it? How does it Work?**


July 10  

**Democracy: What does it Take? Ten Conditions**


July 11  

**People and Politics: Participation in Democracies and Nondemocracies**


July 12  

**The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

Kesselmen et al., Chapter 2 (Britain)

July 16  

**France**

Kesselmen et al., Chapter 3 (France)
I. Ideology and Culture; Interest Groups and Social Mobilization

**July 17**
- Marx and Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party.”

**July 18**

**July 19**

**July 20**
- Midterm exam

**July 23**
- **Rationality and Decision-Making: The Power of Institutions**

**July 24**


**July 25**


**July 26**

**Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory, The Political Economy of Development**


**July 30**

South Africa and Nigeria

Kesselmen et al., Chapter 11 (South Africa) & Chapter 12 (Nigeria).

**July 31**

Brazil and India

Kesselmen et al., Chapter 6 (India) & Chapter 9 (Brazil).

**August 1**

The Middle East & China

Kesselmen et al., Chapter 13 (Iran) and Chapter 14 (China).

**August 2**

The Middle East

Moore and Springborg: The Middle East (excerpt)

**August 6**

Islam and Democracy


**August 7**

Islam and Democracy


August 8 Politics in the United States

Kesselman et al., Chapter 7 (United States).

August 9 Politics in the United States


August 10 Review

**Academic Honesty**

Academic integrity is an essential value of any intellectual community, and the University regards academic dishonesty in any form as a serious offense against the academic community in general and against this University in particular. I expect students to be fully aware of the University’s policies regarding academic integrity. Ignorance of academic policies is not considered a defense against substantiated charges of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty, including cheating and falsification of data.