

PSCI 3022

Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Overview

Global warming, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the London and Madrid bombings, rising gas prices, the economic financial crisis, the swine flu, the Arab Spring, or the Japanese tsunami and earthquake – these are just a few of many reasons why everyone should care not only what is going on in the world but also why everyone should try to understand what makes other countries “tick”. While the United States is currently the only super power left, the U.S. is affected by events in other countries. With travel becoming cheaper and easier, globalization on the rise, and technological innovations not only connecting people but also letting people observe events as they unfold, the United States and its residents will feel the impact of events unfolding in other countries. This course is designed to help students understand how other countries operate, why they differ from each other, and how countries can, and do, affect each other.

Overall, the goal of this course is an introduction to comparative politics: the (comparative) study of one or many foreign countries, their institutions, processes and actors. This course is divided into two parts. The first part of this course will introduce the student to the main concepts and theories utilized in the field of comparative politics. Particularly, we will focus on the state, nationalism, ideology, political culture and the comparative method. The second part will apply these concepts and theories to current research topics as well as current events. We will discuss topics such as the political economy, democratization, welfare states, gender, political economy, or the politics of development.

Materials

This is the only required textbook:

Michael J. Sodaro. 2007. *Comparative Politics. A Global Introduction*. (3rd edition). New York: McGraw Hill

Each week I will also post additional required readings on blackboard or hand out readings in class.

Resources

Blackboard

Check Blackboard each week for additional REQUIRED readings. Plus, I will post relevant current events and other helpful resources to Blackboard.

You will also find on Blackboard: this syllabus, instructions for the paper and important course announcements.

Additional Resources

These are all great resources for writing your paper and getting in-depth information about current events politics in other countries:

<http://global.nytimes.com/?iht>
www.economist.com
www.foreignaffairs.com
www.foreignpolicy.com

Goals

After the course, students should be able to:

- Become acquainted with the dominant research traditions and issues in the field of Comparative Politics
- Be encouraged to think critically and not shy away from applying their insights to a critical analysis of politics
- Be prepared for 4000 level PoSCI courses.

Course Requirements

1. **Participation and Attendance:** A successful student-centered course requires that students contribute to the learning process in a meaningful way. Students are expected to attend class and actively engage in course activities. Students who make regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussions, display a willingness to help others work through course concepts, and/or with particularly sophisticated responses on the reflection papers can expect good participation grades. When deciding on your final grade, I will take your participation into account. Students may consult with the instructor at any time for an assessment of participation.
 - a. I expect every student to come to class prepared. This means you have read the required chapters in the textbook AS WELL AS any additional readings on blackboard. I will call on students during class – so be prepared to answer questions!
 - b. I will accept *three excused absences*. Any more absences will negatively affect your attendance grade.
 - c. You will start with an attendance grade of 100%. After three excused absences, *I will abstract 5% for each missed class or for each unexcused class*. Excused means that you emailed me BEFORE class with a reason why you cannot attend class.
 - d. Attendance will be taken in every class. You must sign the attendance sheet. If you are late, you need to see me after class to add your name. Because being on time for important appointments (such as a class) is a valuable life skill, being late at three occasions will count as one absence.
2. **Class Paper:** You will write a class paper that will compare the United States to another country based on a specific issue. You will be able to choose the topic after consulting with me.
 - a. Paper length: 10 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman Font size 12
 - b. You need to submit your topic by October 28, 2011
 - c. The paper is due on Friday, November 18, 2011

3. **Pop Quizzes:** After every major theme, expect a short multiple-choice quiz. There will be 4 quizzes total.
4. **Final Exam:** The Final Exam will cover the complete content of the course. The final exam will consist of multiple choice, short answers and one essay question. I will provide a study guide.

Course Evaluation

- Participation & Attendance: **20%**
- Pop Quizzes: **20%** (5% each)
- Paper: **30%**
- Final Exam: **30%**

Please do come see me, before and after class, during office hours or, if those do not work for you, at other times. Please do not hesitate to speak with me if you have questions or concerns.

Course Schedule

	Theme	Required Reading	Spotlight/Exam s
Week 1: 8/26	Introduction	No required readings	Spotlight: Refugees
Week 2: 9/2	Concepts and Critical Thinking	Sodaro: Chapter 1 (pp. 3-11 and 27-29), Chapter 3 (only until p. 74)	Movie: Bowling for Columbine
Week 3: 9/9	The State and its Institutions	Sodaro: Chapter 5 and Foreign Policy “2011 Failed State Index”	Spotlight: Fragile and Failed States (Zimbabwe, Somalia)
Week 4: 9/16	Nations: nationalism and nation building	Sodaro: Chapter 6 Walt. 2011. “Nationalism Rules” (Foreign Policy Magazine) Keating. 2011. “Redrawing the Map” (Foreign Policy Magazine)	Spotlight: National Self-Determination (South Sudan)
Week 5: 9/23	State institutions and electoral systems	Sodaro: Chapter 8	Spotlight: parliamentary debates
Week 6: 9/30	People and Politics: Participation	Sodaro: Chapter 11	Spotlight: Political Participation in the news today

Week 7: 10/7	Political Culture & Ideology	Sodaro: Chapter 12 and 13	Spotlight: Post-materialism
Week 8: 10/14	Germany, France, UK	Sodaro Chapter 16-18	Spotlight: How does the US compare?
Week 9: 10/21	Democracy: What is it?	Sodaro: Chapter 7	Spotlight: Democracy Index – you be the judge!
Week 10: 10/28	Democracy: Conditions	Sodaro: Chapter 9 and 10	PAPER TOPICS DUE Movie: Building Democracy in War-Torn Afghanistan
Week 11: 11/4	China & Russia	Sodaro: Chapter 20 and 21 Fukuyama: the End of History Kagan: the End of Dreams and the Return of History	Spotlight: The End of History or the End of Dreams?
Week 12: 11/11	Gender & Comparative Politics	Razavi. 2000. “Women in Contemporary Democratization” (Executive Summary only) Selective Readings from IDEA. 2005. “Women in Parliament” Liberia (Country Report) available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1043500.stm	Movie: Praying the Devil Back to Hell
Week 13: 11/18	Political Economy	Sodaro: Chapter 14	CLASS PAPERS DUE.
Week 14: 12/1	Comparing Welfare States	Garfinkel et. al. 2010. <i>Wealth & Welfare States. Is America a Laggard or a Leader.</i> Chapter 1 and 2 Shruggs and Allan. 2004. ‘Social Stratification and Welfare Regimes for the Twenty-first Century Revisiting The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism.’ <i>World Politics</i> 60, no. 4 (July): 642-664 Alesina, A., E. Glaeser, and B. Sacerdote (2001), ‘Why Doesn’t the United States have a European-Style Welfare State?’, <i>Brookings Papers on Economic Activity</i>	Movie: Sick around the world
Week 15: 12/8	Political Development & Exam Review	Sodaro: Chapter 15	
Week 16	Final Exam (date to be announced)		