

POLI 130.003: Introduction to Comparative Politics

MWF 12:20-1:10 PM, Hanes Hall 130

Instructor: Cole Harvey

Spring 2015

Office Hours: Monday 10:30-11:30 am, Wednesday 9-11 am, or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to comparative politics: the study and comparison of domestic politics across countries. We will cover a range of topics related to world politics. In the first portion of class, we will discuss foundational topics like ideology, nationalism, and modern statehood. From there, we will cover democracy, authoritarianism, and the design of political institutions. In the last segment of the course, we will cover specific topics of importance for countries around the world, including political violence and economic development.

Aims and Outcomes

By the time you leave this course, you should have a broad base of knowledge about the world's political systems. You will gain exposure to some of the key questions in the field of comparative politics: what is democracy, and what causes countries to become (or fail to become) democratic? Why are political institutions important? How can we design them to best fit a particular society? You will also become familiar with the domestic political structures and processes of specific countries beyond the United States.

Required Textbook

Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases

Dickovick, J. Tyler and Jonathan Eastwood

Oxford University Press, 2013

Course Website (Sakai)

The course website is on Sakai (<http://sakai.unc.edu>). I will use the course website to post the syllabus, any non-textbook readings, lecture slides, and other course information in an easily accessible location. Please let me know immediately if you have any issues logging into the website.

Course Grade Components

15%: Participation (total)

- 12%: In-class attendance and participation
- 3%: Discussion question

20%: Essay 1

25%: Essay 2

10%: Group Presentation

15%: Mid-term exam

15%: Final Exam

Attendance and Participation

Monday and Wednesday sessions will be mainly lecture-based, with some discussion and small-group work. Attending the MW lectures is strongly recommended, since this material will be on the mid-term and final exams, but I will not be keeping track of attendance on these days. On Fridays we will have something like a recitation session, which will be primarily discussion-based. Attending these sessions is important, and I will take attendance each Friday.

One unexcused absence from ‘recitation’ will be accepted without penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a 1/6 reduction in the participation grade (2% of the class grade). Five or more unexcused absences will result in failing the course.

I will excuse absences due to illness with documentation from a doctor or Campus Health Services, due to University-sanctioned events with documentation (i.e., you are traveling to compete in a University athletic event), and for religious observations. In the case of other personal obligations that will prevent you from attending a Friday session, please discuss it with me in advance if you would like me to consider excusing the absence.

The participation grade will reflect a holistic assessment of your participation in lecture, small-group discussion, and the Friday recitations.

Discussion Questions and Friday sessions

Each student will sign up to provide a discussion question for our Friday sessions once during the semester. As a result, we will have 3-4 student-submitted questions each week to frame our discussion. These questions should be submitted using the Assignments tab on Sakai by midnight the day before class (that is, by 11:59 pm Thursday), and also brought to class on Friday. Discussion questions will be graded on a pass-fail basis.

Discussion questions should be designed to stimulate discussion and go beyond the text of the readings. That is, they should pose a deeper question and not restate definitions or concepts from the reading. Discussion questions are a good opportunity to consider current events, or aspects of American politics, in light of the material we are considering that week.

On Fridays we will discuss “Case in Context” readings from the textbook, as well as students’ questions. These are short readings from the back of the textbook in which a particular country is used to explore the topic at hand, and should be read before Friday’s class. Discussion questions copied from the “Case in Context” section (perhaps unsurprisingly) won’t be accepted.

Country-case Essays

You are required to submit two five-page papers. The detailed requirements and formatting guidelines will be posted on Sakai. You will select one country to analyze in both papers. You will analyze a country that has received a rating of “partly free” from the democracy-promotion NGO Freedom House, indicating that your country is somewhere between a functioning liberal democracy and a wholly authoritarian regime. Democratic institutions may be present, but they are not functioning properly.

- For Country Paper #1, you will describe your regime and propose an explanation for incomplete democratic consolidation there.

- For Country Paper #2, you will examine ways that your country can become more democratic in the future, with a focus on political institutions. How would you suggest that the country move toward improving democracy given its own unique history?

Group Presentation

The group presentations are based on the country papers. Having completed two research papers on your country, you are likely to be the class's expert on that case. You will be put into groups with other 'experts,' defined by world region (e.g. Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa). Each group will be asked to come to a consensus about democracy in their region, and will present their findings to the class, along with relevant comparisons and contrasts across their cases. Everyone is expected to participate in the Q&A after each presentation. A full description of the assignment will be posted on Sakai.

Mid-Term Exam

The mid-term will be held on Wednesday February 18. It will be a multiple-choice exam meant to test students' comprehension of the readings and lecture material for the first half of the course.

Final Exam

The final will be on Monday April 27 at 12:20 pm, in our regular classroom (Hanes 130). The University sets the final exam schedule. The exam will cover material after the mid-term, and will consist of short answer and multiple choice questions.

Course Policies

Discussion

I hope to make the class a welcoming place for everyone to join in discussion, and I understand that some students are more comfortable with public speaking than others. Everyone's perspective can help enrich our discussion, so I encourage you to feel free to offer questions or comments. A few guidelines to follow during discussions:

- While differences of opinion are welcome in the classroom, it is essential that we treat one another with respect. Anyone behaving in a disrespectful way may be asked to leave the classroom.
- Our discussions will be most successful when all voices can be heard.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions! Everyone has different areas of expertise, but it is also likely that others have similar questions.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones should be put away during class (emergencies, of course, excepted). If you use your phone during class, I may deduct from your participation grade. Laptops are welcome during the MW lecture classes, but should generally not be used during discussion sessions. Please be aware that using the laptop for non-class purposes can be distracting for those around you, and is not very difficult for instructors to detect! Using laptops in a distracting way may also result in a reduced participation grade.

Late Penalty

Late work will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade (from a B to a C, for example) for each 24-hour period that it is late.

Communication

I try to respond to emails promptly, but don't be alarmed if it takes a full business day for me to reply. Please include the course number in the subject line of any emails (this makes it harder for your email to get lost).

I am happy to discuss grades with you in person, but ask that you allow a 24-hour waiting period after the grade is posted.

Important Dates

1/22: Submit top 3 country choices

2/18: Mid-term exam

2/27: Essay 1 due

3/27: Essay 2 due

4/15: Group presentations begin

4/27: Final exam

Grading Scale

94 – 100: A

90 – 93: A-

87 – 89: B+

84 – 86: B

80 – 83: B-

77 – 79: C+

74 – 76: C

70 – 73: C-

60 – 69: D

0 – 59: F

Useful Resources

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/> -- The Writing Center has resources and services that can help improve your academic writing, including one-on-one tutoring, handouts, and support for students for whom English is a second language.

<https://accessibility.unc.edu/> -- Accessibility Resources & Service works with colleagues throughout the University to ensure that the programs and facilities of the University are accessible to all students. Additionally, ARS determines reasonable accommodations to provide students with disabilities with equal access to the opportunities available to them at Carolina as independently as possible.

<https://campushealth.unc.edu/services/counseling-and-psychological-services> -- Counseling and Psychological Services can provide resources, individual therapy, academic interventions and more to students who are experiencing challenges related to their mental health.

<http://studentsuccess.unc.edu/resources-carolina/> -- A fuller list of resources available to students at UNC.

Course Schedule

Friday sessions are discussion sections unless otherwise noted.

- **Week 1: Introduction to political science / comparative politics**

- 1/7: Introductions, and what is comparative politics?
- 1/9: Theories, methods, evidence, arguments, examples
- Readings: Dickovick chapters 1 and 2
- **Week 2: The modern state**
 - 1/12: The modern state and its origins
 - 1/14: Theories of modern state formation
 - Reading: Dickovick chapter 3 (The Modern State)
 - Case reading: Weak states and Nigeria: pp.578-586
- **Week 3: Nationalism**
 - 1/19: No Class (MLK)
 - 1/21: Nationalism and the case of Yugoslavia
 - Readings: Dickovick chapter 12 (Nationalism and National Identity)
 - Case readings: “The Nigerian Civil War” pp. 591-92
 - Additional reading: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26875506> on Rwandan genocide
- **Week 4: Ideology and Religion**
 - 1/26: Ideology
 - 1/28: Ideologies in practice: Russia and Eastern Europe
 - Reading: Dickovick chapter 14 (Ideology and Religion in Modern Politics)
 - Case readings: “Religion and Secularism in France” pp. 426-431, 438; “Religious differences and conflict in Nigeria”, pp. 592-593
- **Week 5: Democracy and democratization**
 - 2/2: Defining democracy
 - 2/4: Theories of democratization
 - Readings: Dickovick chapter 5 (Democracy and Democratization)
 - Case readings: “Democracy’s Success in India,” pp. 517-523, 525-26; “Is American Democracy in Trouble?” pp. 479
- **Week 6: Varieties of authoritarianism**
 - 2/9: Authoritarian regimes
 - 2/11: Authoritarian elections and the case of Mexico
 - Readings: Dickovick chapter 6 (Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown),
 - Case readings: “Democratic Features of Authoritarian Systems: The Case of Iran,” pp. 548-556; “Oligarchy, Democracy, and Authoritarianism in Russia,” pp. 511-12
- **Week 7: Mid-term week**
 - 2/16: Review session
 - 2/18: Mid-term
 - 2:20: No recitation session, but note that you have two chapters next week and paper is due!
- **Week 8: Federalism, Legislatures and Elections**
 - 2/23: Federalism and devolution
 - 2/25: Electoral systems
 - Readings: Dickovick chapters 7 and 8 (Constitutions and Constitutional Design, Legislatures and Legislative Elections)
 - Case readings: “Federalism and Differences in Development in India,” pp. 526-527; “PR and Political Power in the Russian Duma,” p. 512.
 - Paper 1 due, Friday 2/27

- **Week 9: Presidential and parliamentary systems, electoral manipulation**
 - 3/2: Parliamentary systems
 - 3/4: Electoral manipulation
 - Dickovick chapter 9 (Executive)
 - Case readings: “Electing the French President,” pp. 435-36, “Who Governs China?” pp. 531-539, 542-43
- **Week 10: No class—Spring Break**
 - 3/9: Spring Break
 - 3/11: Spring Break
- **Week 11: Parties and interest groups**
 - 3/16: Political parties and party systems
 - 3/18: Interest groups
 - Dickovick chapter 10 (Parties, Party Systems, Interest Groups)
 - Case readings: “The Chinese Party System,” pp. 543-44; “Consensus-based Politics in Germany,” pp. 441-448, 452
- **Week 12: Political violence**
 - 3/23: Contentious politics
 - 3/25: Revolutions, successful and failed
 - Reading: Dickovick chapter 11 (Contention and Revolutions)
 - Case readings: “Brazil’s Landless Movement,” pp. 487-494, 500; “Iran’s Islamic Revolution and “Green Revolution?”” p. 558
 - Paper 2 due, Friday 3/27
- **Week 13: Political economy and the welfare state**
 - 3/30: Political economy
 - 4/1: Welfare state
 - Readings: Dickovick chapter 4 (Development and Political Economy)
 - Case readings: “Does the Global Economy Help or Hurt Developing Nations Like Brazil?” pp. 495; “Did Free Markets Help the US Get Rich?” pp. 478-79, “Why Are Natural Resources Sometimes a Curse? The Nigerian Case,” pp.586-587, “How did China Become an Economic Power?” pp. 539-540.
- **Week 14: Comparative Politics and International Relations**
 - 4/6: The EU, and the democratic peace
 - 4/8: Work on group projects
 - Readings: Dickovick chapter 15 (Comparative Politics and IR)
 - Case readings: “Resource Management in Japan,” pp. 455-62, 468-69; “Iran and the Politics of Nuclear Proliferation,” pp. 560-61, “India in the Twenty-First Century,” pp. 529-530.
- **Week 15: Begin group work**
 - 4/13: No class
 - 4/15: Group presentations
 - 4/17: Group presentations
- **Week 16: Group presentations**
 - 4/20: Group presentations
 - 4/22: Group presentations
 - 4/24: Group presentations
- **Final exam: Monday, April 27 and 12:20pm**