

## **Political Science 100: Introduction to Comparative Politics**

Instructor: Ryan Kennedy  
Quarter: Spring 2007  
Time: Tuesday/Thursday 8:30-10:20 a.m.  
Location: MP 1046

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### **I. Overview:**

This course is designed to be a general overview of fundamental concepts in political science and government, presented in a comparative context. This course is a companion course to PS 101, which introduces government in the United States. While the US will sometimes be used as an example of a political phenomenon, the focus will be on countries in other parts of the world.

Comparison is a primary tool for political scientists. Even those whose studies focus on a particular country (ex. American government) or a particular subject area (ex. international relations) rely on comparison to discover what factors are important in influencing particular outcomes. As a field, comparative politics usually defines itself as the comparative study of domestic politics in different states. Such comparisons highlight important factors that influence economic development, political and civil freedom, political representation, civil war, public policy, and much more.

Of course, with such a wide range of phenomenon under its umbrella, theories developed in comparative politics cannot help but influence, and be influenced by, those in other subfields. For example, the European Union, formed through agreement between states, has changed the politics and policies of most European countries. In developing countries, international organizations (ex. World Bank and International Monetary Fund), multi-national corporations (ex. Mobil-Exxon and McDonalds), and the process of globalization of which these are a part, constitute important factors in shaping domestic politics. On the flip-side, domestic policy often influences international relations. Public opinion has often influenced the development of international organization (ex. the US rejection of the League of Nations after World War I). And the Bush administration has explicitly justified its policy of democracy-promotion on the findings of some political scientists that democracies are less likely to go to war with each other.

From this course, students should be well prepared to take higher-level courses in political science, as well as have a strong foundation for analyzing and understanding politics around the world.

### **II. The GEC**

PS100 fits the following GEC requirements:

Social Science -- Goals/Rationale: Courses in social science help students understand human behavior and cognition, and the structure of human societies, cultures and institutions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies.
2. Students comprehend human differences and similarities in various psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts.
3. Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

### **III. Course Design:**

This course is designed in a predominately lecture format. However, students are encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions. Students may also be called on to answer questions about the readings or to comment on presented theories.

We will be looking at six countries as our reference points for this course: Britain, Mexico, China, Iran, Nigeria and Russia. This course, however, is not just about the countries themselves. It is also about the concepts and theories which political scientists have developed to better understand political systems. Students will be expected to develop a strong foundation from which to compare political systems in a wide range of countries and situations. Students will also be expected to improve their ability to conduct analysis (explain why things occur) and analyze arguments (providing support for their conclusions).

#### **IV. Assignments and Expectations:**

##### **A. Current Events Quizzes**

This is not a current events course. For anyone who is interested in politics, however, a general understanding of what is going on in the world is required. Students are encouraged to read all international articles on *The Week's* website every week (<http://www.theweekmagazine.com/>). A subscription for the quarter can be purchased for \$4 by students who would prefer paper copies of the magazine. Students are also encouraged to look at other international news resources, and a list of some such resources can be found on the course website (TV news is unlikely to be adequate, and the instructor cannot guarantee the adequacy of any particular alternative news source). Quizzes will be given five times during the quarter, and will focus on major world events related to the topics covered in class. Each quiz will consist of five short-answer questions, but each quiz is only worth three points. So you only need to get three correct answers per quiz to receive full credit. Excess points on any quiz DO NOT transfer over to other quizzes.

##### **B. Constitutional Design - Group Project**

In the real world, people collaborate to solve problems - collaboration is a skill. To promote active student collaboration, during the course of the term there will be a collaborative research exercise, in which students, working together as a research group, will act to formulate a "constitution" regarding the democratization of one of several countries: (which we will choose randomly on the first day of class). In this project, each group will be asked (if these countries were to democratize) to formulate a constitutional design that would be most appropriate for this country (different plans can be presented if there is dissent in the group). This constitutional design will include the design of executive power, the structure of the legislature, the electoral system, the territorial division of power and the design of the judiciary. These constitutional designs will be presented to the class during two class sessions (scheduled for the last week of classes). Each individual in the group should be ready to present. I will randomly select someone in the group to answer questions regarding the solution the group came up with. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THIS EXERCISE IS NOT ABOUT IDEOLOGY. RATHER IT IS DESIGNED TO BE AN EXERCISE IN LINKING ANALYSIS WITH POLICY PRACTICE. LEAVE YOUR IDEOLOGY OUTSIDE OF THIS EXERCISE.**

##### **C. Constitutional Design - Individual Project**

Related to the collaborative project, students will have an individual assignment. This assignment will involve taking some aspect of the constitution that was formulated by the group and writing a five-page justification for those provisions. It will be up to the individuals within the group to decide what provision each group member will write about. **NO TWO GROUP MEMBERS MAY WRITE ON THE SAME PROVISIONS. YOU WILL NEED TO DO INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FOR THIS PROJECT, IN-CLASS MATERIAL IS ONLY A STARTING POINT!**

##### **D. Class Attendance**

Class attendance is mandatory and class participation is strongly encouraged. Attendance will be taken starting at the third class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences, and will be left to their own devices to make up the material. Any absences beyond these two will cause a one point drop in the student's class participation score for each additional absence, except in special circumstances approved by the instructor. Students who are not able to attend due to medical conditions, family emergencies or activities, should inform the instructor as soon as possible. In some cases, students may be asked to provide written documentation of their reason for absence. Full attendance will guarantee a student fifteen of the twenty points for class participation. The other five points are based on students' participation in answering/asking questions, participating in current events discussions, and attending office hours (if necessary). **WARNING: even without the class participation points, it will be extremely difficult for students to pass this course without strong attendance. Lectures will regularly cover test materials that are not in the readings.**

If a student needs to miss a class during an exam, the student should inform the instructor as soon as he/she is aware of the conflict. For school activities, a schedule of anticipated absences should be given to the instructor at the beginning of the quarter. If contacting the instructor before the exam is not possible, as might be the case for a sudden illness or injury, the student should be prepared with written documentation and should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Tests will be made up before or after the original exam date at the instructor's discretion (note: make-up exam may be different from the original exam to prevent cheating).

### **E. Exams**

Finally, students will have two exams. The quarter is roughly divided in half. The first half will be covered in a midterm exam, while the second half will be covered in an exam during finals week. Students will be given a review sheet ahead of the exams, which will lay out potential topics to be covered and sample essay questions. Each exam will involve multiple choice, to test the students grasp on basic factual knowledge, and two essay questions. The essay questions will ask the student to discuss one or more theories discussed in class. To get full credit on these questions, student must not only show that they remember the material, but also that they are able to critically analyze the theory and show how it relates to other concepts discussed in class. The final exam will be semi-comprehensive. This means that multiple choice questions will only focus on topics covered after the midterm, but the essays may involve material from the first half of the quarter.

### **F. Grading**

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Attendance and class participation:	20 points
Current Events Quizzes	15 points
Midterm Exam	40 points
Final Exam	50 points
Group project	40 points
Individual Project	35 points
Total Points Available	200 points

### **V. Readings**

The bulk of the readings for this course are found in a textbook that should be available at the various university-area bookstores (and of course through internet retailers and discounters). Thankfully, the text is available in a paperback edition, and is therefore comparatively affordable. In addition, several readings will be available online.

The required text for this course is:

Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, and William Joseph, eds. 2004. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Third Edition. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company). ISBN. 0-618-21446-1.

### **VI. Online Readings and E-mail**

Everyone in the class should have a working e-mail address that they will be expected to provide at the first class meeting (or at the first class of their attendance). E-mail will be the primary means for course announcements, distribution of supplementary materials, and answering important questions between classes. Readings that are not in the book will be provided online using either jstor or online reserve. (Note: this will require Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free of charge on the internet).

### **VII. Academic Honesty**

I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the university committee on academic misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy.

### **VIII. Disability**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the

appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office of Disability Service, I encourage you to do so.

## **IX. Schedule of Readings and Key Concepts**

### **March 27 -- Introduction**

- Syllabus and expectations.
- Basic concepts
  - what is comparative politics?
  - evolution of comparative politics since World War II
  - basic problems of prediction and analysis (why do we get things wrong?)
  - state, nation, ethnicity, regime, government
  - levels of analysis - individual, group, state, system
- Logical analysis and argumentation
  - what makes a good/bad argument
  - use of evidence and backing for claims

### **March 29 -- Democracy, Political Economy, and Social Mobilization**

- David Collier and Steven Levitsky. (1997). "Democracy With Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics*, 49(3): 430-451. (available on jstor or website)
- Samuel P. Huntington. 1965. "Political Development and Political Decay." *World Politics*, 17: 386-430. (available on jstor or website)
- Defining democracy
- Social mobilization and Institutions
- Modernization and its critics

### **April 3 & 5 -- Great Britain**

- Reading: KKW, p. 37-90
- The "Westminster Model"
- Single-member electoral system (Duverger's law)
- Classic model of economic and political "development"
- Hegemony
- Development of political cleavages
- Head of state/head of government
- Common law

### **April 10 & 12 -- Russia (no class on the 12th due to ASN and MPSA Conferences)**

- Reading: KKW, p. 353-414
- Communism - establishment and decline
- Presidentialism and "Super-Presidentialism" (Perils of Presidentialism)
- Mixed-member electoral systems
- Federalism in a comparative context
- Democratic transition and "transitology"
- Economic transition, privatization, and the foundations of capitalism
- Relationship between economic and political development

### **April 17 & 19 -- Iran**

- Reading: KKW, p. 577-624
- Causes and consequences of revolution
- Oil economics (rentier state)
- Types of legitimacy
- Politics in semi-democratic regimes
- Effects of natural resources

**April 24 & 26 -- China**

- Reading: KKW, p. 625-682
- Communism - establishment, revolution and reform
  - Ideology and politics
  - Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism
  - Guerrilla and revolutionary warfare
  - Interpretations of political culture

**May 1 -- Review****May 3 -- Midterm****May 8 & 10 -- Mexico**

- Reading: KKW, p. 471-518
- Single-party development
  - Corporatism and clientelism
  - Import Substitution, industrialization and challenges to modernization
  - Debt crisis and its implications
  - International influence on domestic politics and development

**May 15 & 17 -- Nigeria**

- Reading: KKW, p. 519-575
- Colonialism and post-colonialism
  - The "natural resource curse"
  - Structural adjustment and its consequences
  - Corruption
  - Military dictatorship
  - Ethnic and religious conflict
  - Consociationalism

**May 22 & 24 -- Globalization**

- Readings:
- SSRC, "Introduction to Globalization,"  
[http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/teaching\\_resource/tr\\_globalization.htm](http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/teaching_resource/tr_globalization.htm)
- Barry Eichengreen, "US Foreign and Economic Policy After September 11."
- David Held, "Violence, Law and Justice in a Global Age."  
[http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/teaching\\_resource/tr\\_globalization\\_essays.htm](http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/teaching_resource/tr_globalization_essays.htm)
- Definitions of globalization
  - Effects of globalization on local economics
  - IMF, WTO, World Bank and other economic institutions
  - The UN, EU, and other international political institutions
  - Effect of globalization on culture
  - The globalization of warfare and terrorism

**Week 9 (May 29 & 31): Student Presentations**

**June 10 -- Final Exam (optional review session to be organized before test)  
Final Paper Due By End of Exam!!!!**