

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

POLI 2053, Section 3
Fall 2014

Course location: Tureaud 200
Course time: MWF, 10:30-11:20

Course instructor: Michael Toje
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Office: Stubbs 334
Hours: MW, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm or
by appointment

Course Description & Objectives

Never before has the world been more interconnected than at the threshold of the 21st century. As such, knowing the politics of other countries is necessary to deal with other countries intelligently, as well as serve as a mirror to understand our own politics.

This class aims to draw a deeper understanding of the historical, cultural, and political contexts that shape contemporary politics around the world. This course, then, will introduce students to concepts, ideas, and theories in the field of comparative politics, and their application and practice in the real world. The class consists of two parts: the first part explores abstract themes and generalizable topics within the field. The second part comprises case studies of six countries, demonstrating how to apply the concepts, ideas and theories learned in the first part.

Required Textbook:

Sodaro, Michael J. 2007. *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*, 3rd Edition.
Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

ISBN: 9780073526317

Textbooks are available at the Bookstore, as well as at the Chimes Textbook Exchange and the University Co-op. Should you find yourself especially fond of the textbook, copies are also available cheaply through online book dealers.

Course Requirements

The following several components make up the final grade:

- Participation – Participating in class lectures, discussions, and activities in an active and constructive manner is part of this class. Earning participation points in a class you are not regularly attending will be difficult. Participation will make up 10% of your overall score.
- Let's Make a Constitution! – Three group projects that explore constitutional design: why some matter, why some do not, and how the various topics discussed in the first half of the semester all interact with one another to create a political system. The first two will be worth 10% each; the third requires a group presentation at the end of the semester, a 5-page paper describing and defending the contents of your constitution, and counts for 20% of the final grade. Details for all three exercises will follow in class.
- Midterm exam – One in-class exam will be given during the course, covering the concepts, ideas and theories covered in the first eight weeks of class. The midterm exam will be worth 20% of your overall score.

- Final Exam - The course will have a comprehensive final exam. The final exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade.

Assignment Policy

The instructor reserves the right to change the listed assignments. Students will receive a revised syllabus if the listing of course assignments changes.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is the responsibility of the student, and each student is expected to attend all classes. Any student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what the student may have missed from class. The instructor will determine the validity of a student's reason(s) for any absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons and documentation.

Valid documentable reasons for absences include:

1. Illness
2. Serious family emergency
3. Special curricular requirements such as judging trips or field trips
4. Court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty
5. Military obligations
6. Serious weather conditions
7. Religious observances

Disability Code

The Office of Disability Services assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help overcome barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are available for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student's disability-based need. Students must provide current documentation of their disabilities. Students should contact the office early to arrange the necessary accommodations. ~ LSU General Catalog

Late Work

Please avoid turning in late work. I realize life happens and that you may not always be able to submit your work on time. I will accept one unexcused late assignment at a deduction of 10% for each day it is late. Any additional unexcused late assignments will receive a deduction of 20% for each day they are late. An assignment is late when an assignment is not available, or incomplete, on the date it is due.

Academic Integrity

The following is the Louisiana State University's official statement on academic integrity: "Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student..." (Sec. 5.1, C. of the LSU Code of Student Conduct).

For more specific information see the following website:
<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/AI.htm>

Plagiarism and Citation Method

As a student at LSU, your responsibility is to refrain from plagiarizing another's academic property. To this end, you must utilize an appropriate citation method for all coursework. Ignorance of a citation method is no excuse for academic misconduct. One tool available to assist you in correct citations is the references function in Microsoft Word. This program automatically formats the information you input according to the citation method you select for the document. This program also has the ability to generate a reference or works cited page for the information you input. The version of Microsoft Word with these added features is available in most University computer labs.

Expectations of Written Work

All papers are to be college-level papers. This means that they are to be typed, spell-checked and edited, well written with a logical flow of thought, and correctly cited. LSU's Communication across the Curriculum center is a terrific resource for help with writing papers.

Group Work and Unauthorized Assistance

Each student must complete all work without assistance from a classmate or group, unless stated explicitly by the instructor so that the instructor can assess individual performance on each assignment. If the students have a group- or partner-based project assigned, each student may still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully. When in doubt, e-mail the instructor or ask during class. Seeking clarification is the sole responsibility of the student. Assuming group or partner based work is acceptable without permission constitutes a violation of the LSU Code of Student Conduct.

Special notice

Please do not use laptops and mobile devices (iPads, cellphones, *etc.*) during class time. The only exception to this is by exemption from the Office of Disability Services. I am well aware of the benefits and the drawbacks of laptops in class, and I have come to the conclusion that they are not worth the trouble they cause in the classroom.

Important Semester Dates

Sep 3 (Wednesday) – Final date for dropping courses without receiving a grade of “W”

Sep 4 (Thursday) – Final date for adding courses for credit and making section changes

Oct 2 – Fall holiday begins

Nov 7 (Friday) – Final date for rescheduling final exam dates, and for dropping classes

Nov 26 (Wednesday) – Thanksgiving holiday

Dec 3-8 (Wednesday – Sunday) – Concentrated Study Period

Dec 8-13 (Monday – Saturday) – Final Exam Week

Course Schedule

Week 1: Aug 25-29
Chapters 1,2,3

Intro to Comparative

- What is comparative politics?
- What is a state? Nation?
- Power, legitimacy, identity, and values

The science of politics

- Methods of comparative politics
- Hypothesis testing

Week 2: Sep 3-5
Chapter 6

States and Nations

- Nationalism
- Nation building
- States vs. nations

(no class on Monday – enjoy your Labor Day!

This week – final day for adding or dropping courses)

Week 3: Sep 8-12
Chapters 7,8

Democracies

- Presidential and Parliamentary
- Majoritarian and PR
- Emergence and consolidation
- What makes a democracy a democracy?

Week 4: Sep 15-19
Chapters 11,12

Political participation and culture

- Identity and socialization
- Cleavages and consociation
- Contentious politics

Week 5: Sep 22-26
Chapter 12

Ideology

- Liberalism
- Conservatism, socialism, and fascism
- Islamism?

First constitution due (Monday in class)

Week 6: Sep. 29 - Oct 3
See Moodle for readings

Non-democracies

- Types
- Stability
- Transition
- Hybrid Regimes

(no class on Friday – enjoy the fall break!)

Week 7: Oct 6-10
Chapter 14

Political economy

- Rational choice, contracts, and the Pareto optimum
- Laissez-faire and centrally-planned economies
- Mixed economies and the welfare state
- Development and the wealth of nations

Week 8: Oct 13-17
No assigned readings

Catch-up, midterm review, midterm

Week 9: Oct 20-24 Chapter 16	UK <i>Second constitution due (Monday in class)</i>
Week 10: Oct 27-31 Chapter 17	France
Week 11: Nov 3-7 Chapter 18	Germany
Week 12: Nov 10-14 Chapter 20	Russia
Week 13: Nov 17-21 Chapter 21	China
Week 14: Nov 24-28 <i>See Moodle for readings</i>	Iran <i>(no class on Friday – happy Thanksgiving!)</i>
Week 15: Dec 1-5	Group presentations Review
Week 16: Dec 8-13	Final exam, papers due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final exam: Thursday 11, 12:30-2:30 • Final papers due Saturday 13, 6:00 AM