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POLI 2053(2) Spring 2014
T/TH 12-1:20
1116 Patrick Taylor Hall
Louisiana State University

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Overview: This course presents an introduction to the study of comparative politics. Comparative political scientists study political systems and processes (contemporary and historical) in order to understand how they are similar, how they differ, and why. For example, why do some countries have democratic forms of government while others are ruled by authoritarian leaders? Do certain forms of government and economic systems have “better” outcomes? Why do revolutions occur? How does globalization affect the power of states? These are but a few of the interesting and important questions that we will analyze and discuss this semester.

Objectives: The class provides a conceptual framework for understanding political phenomena across the globe. Our objectives this semester are first, to understand the important concepts and theories in comparative politics; and second to acquire basic methods and tools to analyze important questions in comparative politics.

Outcomes: After completing this class you will have a better understanding of what comparative political scientists do, and how to compare political phenomena in different countries. You will be able to identify the challenges facing countries across the globe and offer competing explanations for why these countries exhibit such divergent political and economic trajectories. If you are interested in political science as a concentration, this class will prepare you for more advanced subjects. If you just want to understand what is going on in the world, this class will provide you with useful theoretical frameworks.

Academic Integrity and Honesty: I will not tolerate, nor will LSU tolerate, any instance of academic misconduct. Students who violate the LSU Code of Student Conduct will be referred to Student Advocacy & Accountability. For undergraduate students, the outcome will range from failing the assignment to failing the class. If a student has a second academic violation, suspension from LSU is the outcome. Please review the LSU Code of Conduct at <http://saa.lsu.edu/code.htm> and the following article from LSU regarding plagiarism: <https://grok.lsu.edu/Article.aspx?articleId=17072>.

Assessment and Grades:

- **Participation** – To master the material covered in this class and prepare adequately for the exams, you should do all of the assigned readings before class, participate actively and constructively in class discussions, and take good notes. Participation will be measured by class “clicker” participation. Students receive four “freebie” clicker days, to be used for class absences or non-responsiveness. *Note:* If students are not prepared or participating, pop quizzes may be given and incorporated into participation grades. Please

turn off cell phones before class and use a laptop only for class-related activity. Participation is worth 10% of your grade.

- **Literature Reviews-** Students will choose two (2) thematically related articles from the moodle site, draw out the key points of the authors' arguments, detail how the articles are related to each other, and then describe where the articles fit in relation to the broader debates of the field as a whole. Each review is approximately three (3) pages. More detailed guidelines for the article reviews are provided at the end of the syllabus. The first article review is due Thursday, February 13th, and the second article review is due Thursday, May 1st. Late reviews will be reduced one letter grade for each day late. This component of the course is 20% of your grade.
- **Research Paper-** Students will write a 6-8 page research paper, excluding footnotes and bibliography. You may select any paper topic as long as it relates to the lecture material covered in the course. More detailed guidelines for the research paper are provided at the end of the syllabus. A research paper outline is due Tuesday, February 25th. The final paper is due Thursday, April 24th. Late assignments will be reduced a letter grade for each day late. This component of the course is worth 30% of your grade (5% outline, 25% final paper).
- **Midterm exam**–The midterm will cover Units I, II, and III. The format will consist of multiple choice, short answer/definitions and essay questions. The exam will be in class and is scheduled for Thursday, March 13th. Make-up exams will be given only under exceptional circumstance and only with *prior* permission. This component of the course is worth 20% of your grade.
- **Final Exam** – The final exam is not cumulative; it will cover Units IV and V. The format will consist of multiple choice, short answer/definitions and essay questions. The final exam is scheduled for Friday, May 9th, from 5:30-7:30 pm. Final examinations must be given during the published dates for the final examination period and cannot be rescheduled by the instructor. The final exam is worth 20% of your grade.

Activity	Percentage of Grade
Participation	10%
Literature Reviews (2 x 10%)	20%
Research Paper (5% outline, 25% final paper)	30%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total:	100%

Grading Scale: A (100-90), B (89-80), C (79-70), D (69-60), F (59 and below)

Current Events: Students are expected to be familiar with current events in the world and we will begin many class periods with a brief discussion of these events and how they reflect the topics we have discussed to date. You should regularly check out at least two (2) news sources each day, preferably from different countries. This may be most easily accomplished on-line by going to the “world news” section in any of the following news outlets or broadcast sources (this is a sample list only): The New York Times; The Washington Post; The Christian Science

Monitor; The Wall Street Journal; The Financial Times; The International Herald Tribune; The BBC; The Guardian; The Economist (weekly).

Changes to syllabus: I reserve the right to change the syllabus anytime during the semester. This includes the assignment schedule and any requirements.

Texts: The main text is O'Neil, Patrick. *Essentials of Comparative Politics, 4th edition*. (New York: Norton, 2012) which is available at the LSU bookstore or through Amazon.com. Do not use earlier editions. All other readings listed below are posted on the Moodle site for this class. Students are encouraged to print the readings as they will be useful for in-class reference.

Important assignment due dates:

- Thursday, February 14 Literature Review #1
- Tuesday, February 25 Research Paper outline
- Thursday, March 13 Midterm exam
- Thursday, April 24 Research Paper
- Thursday, May 1 Literature Review #2
- Friday, May 9 Final exam (5:30-7:00 pm)

Tentative Calendar

Jan 15	Introduction to Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus and expectations
Jan 21	Introduction to Comparative Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 1
Jan 23	History of Comparative Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lichbach and Zuckerman, “Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction” • King, Keohane, Verba, “The Science in Social Science”
Jan 28	The State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 2
Jan 30	The State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbst, “War and the State in Africa” • Rotberg, “The New Nature of Nation-State Failure” • Krasner, “Sovereignty”
Feb 4	Nations and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 3
Feb 6	Nations and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobsbawm, “Nationalism” • Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War”
Feb 11	Political Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 4
Feb 13	Political Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, <i>An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations</i> (excerpt) • North, “Institutions” • Acemoglu, “Root Causes: A Historical Approach to Assessing the Role of Institutions in Economic Development” <p>LITERATURE REVIEW #1 DUE</p>
Feb 18	Types of Regimes: Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 5
Feb 20	Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schmitter and Karl, “What Democracy Is...and Is Not” • Lijphart, “Constitutional Choices for New Democracies”
Feb 25	Types of Regimes: Non-Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 6 <p>RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE DUE</p>
Feb 27	Non-Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linz and Stepan, “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes” • Weinthal and Luong, “Combatting the Resource Curse: An Alternative Solution to Managing Mineral Wealth” • Levitsky and Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism”
Mar 3	No Class	Mardi Gras
Mar 6	Types of Regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
Mar 11	Catch up-midterm review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch up-midterm review

Mar 13	Midterm Exam	MIDTERM EXAM
Mar 18	Advanced Democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 8
Mar 20	Advanced Democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acemoglu, “Income and Democracy” • Przeworski, “Conquered or Granted? A History of Suffrage Extensions,” • Iversen and Soskice, “Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others”
Mar 25	Regime Transition: Communism/Post-Communism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 9
Mar 27	Regime Transition: Communism and Post-Communism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” • Krastev, “Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism” • Baogang He and Mark E. Warren, “Authoritarian Deliberation: The Deliberative Turn in Chinese Political Development”
Apr 1	Less Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 10
Apr 3	Less Developed and Newly Industrializing States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collier and Gunning, “Why has Africa Grown Slowly?” • Krugman, “The Myth of Asia’s Miracle” • Acemoglu and Johnson, “Disease and Development”
Apr 8	Political Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 7
Apr 10	Political Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolution” • Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism” • Goldstone, “Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies”
Apr 15	No Class	Spring Break
Apr 17	No Class	Spring Break
Apr 22	Globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essentials</i>, Chapter 11
Apr 24	Globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida, “The World is Spiky: Globalization has Changed the Economic Playing Field, But Hasn’t Levelled It” • Rodick, “Is Global Governance Feasible? Is it Desirable?” • Min Jiang, “Authoritarian Informationalism; China’s Approach to Internet Sovereignty” <p>LITERATURE REVIEW #2 DUE</p>
Apr 29	Catch Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
May 1	Final Exam Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
May 9	Final Exam 5:30-7:30 pm	FINAL EXAM 5:30-7:30 pm

ASSIGNMENTS

I. Literature Reviews

Theories are elaborate constructions, built upon insights of past scholarship. New research always depends on the contributions of old. The article review assignment therefore intends to develop the student's ability to first critically examine a published article, then locate it within the context of the rest of the literature as a whole. Successful scholars do not simply read the article, but rather subject it to a methodological analysis and locate it within a broader theoretical framework or tradition.

For this assignment, the student will choose two of the several thematically related articles on moodle, draw out the key points of the authors' arguments, detail how the two articles pertain to one another, and then describe where the two fit in relation to the broader debates of the field as a whole. The hope is that this assignment will "help students become more confident in identifying key issues; determining what factors influence outcomes in global interactions; considering how best to approach a world politics question historically, theoretically, and practically; and recognizing authors' biases, approaches and assumptions so that every article can be understood as part of a story, rather than a story itself."¹

Literature review questions: The review will detail each article in succession, and then finish with a summary evaluation that includes both how convincing the two articles are and how well they fit within the broader literature. Specifically, the student will answer the following questions for each of the articles:

1. What debate is each author addressing? What question is he or she trying to answer?
2. What is the central argument the author is putting forward?
3. What factors/processes/variables does the author feel to be the most important when explaining the core question? In other words, what elements do they feel are important to making a convincing case?
4. What evidence does the author cite to defend his position? What resources are they employing in the service of their argument?
5. Overall, how compelling is the author's main contention? Is it likely to gain wide acceptance and revolutionize the field, or will the piece be forgotten 5 years hence?

The assignment's summary and conclusion will detail:

1. How do the articles compare to each other? Which one is more convincing? On which side does the balance of evidence fall? Clearly explain why you conclude this is the case. Describe what sort of metrics you used in making your determination.
2. Where in the battle of ideas can these arguments be located? Who agrees with their contentions, and who does not? Explain how the articles fit in the broader theoretical debates discussed in this class unit section.
3. Any concluding thoughts on the direction that scholarly research should follow next? Are these articles a fresh start or a dead end?

¹ Steven L Spiegel, Jennifer Morrison Taw, Fred L. Wehling, and Kristen P. Williams, *Readings in World Politics: A New Era*, "Introduction," (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005), p. 5.

Unless permission is given from the instructor, articles **MUST** be selected from the course syllabus. Any assignment failing to adhere to this stipulation will be redone.

The length of the review is expected to be roughly three (3) double spaced pages (12 pt. font), or approximately 750 words. This works out to about one page of analysis for each article, and a page for the broader contextual discussion. You do not need footnotes or a bibliography for these reviews since you are mainly discussing the two articles; however, you should clearly make parenthetical citations to the author and page number when necessary. If you cite another article from the thematic section in your review for contextual purposes, use a similar parenthetical citation to author and page number.

The first article review is due Thursday, February 13th and the second article review is due Thursday, May 1st.

II. Research Paper

A. Research Paper outline

The research paper outline is designed to help the student clarify his paper topic, as well as the structure of the argument to be contained within. If anything, the assignment will prevent students leaving the writing of their term paper until the night before its due date.

In no more than two (2) double-spaced pages (500 words), in 12 pt. font, the student will detail the following elements:

1. Objective of the paper: What issue (related to the course's content) is the paper to study? Why is this exercise important and worthy of consuming precious research resources? How will this project benefit the field as a whole?
2. Research question: In one or two sentences, what is the research question that the paper is trying to answer?
3. Thesis: What, in no more than two sentences, is the main argument of the paper?
4. Theoretical framework: Where does the argument sit in relation to the rest of the literature in the field? How do your theories, arguments, and methodologies relate to those of the rest of the field? *Map* the intellectual terrain of your issue.
5. Methodology: How is the paper going to prove its argument? How will the thesis be made compelling to the reader? What are your reasons, and where will you find such evidence?
6. Prospective bibliography. Provide the PEER-REVIEWED sources (books, journal articles) that the paper will use to gather evidence in support of the thesis. Provide at least three (3) sources at this point.

The research paper outline is due Tuesday, February 25.

B. Research Paper

A research paper provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate his or her ability to incorporate and apply established theory as part of a sophisticated analysis of a contemporary issue related to the focus of this course. Given the short length of this paper, you will not be able to examine issues in a critical and enlightened manner. The goal of this exercise is to introduce you to comparative analysis and improve your research and writing skills.

The student may select any paper topic as long as it relates to the lecture material covered in the course. Find a question pertinent to the modern study of comparative politics, and then attempt to answer it.

The course syllabus provides a detailed guide as to the topics suitable for examination. Should you have any questions, require clarification, or are having difficulty finding a suitable topic, please see me during office hours. All students are encouraged to consult with me prior to the paper's conclusion.

Expectations for the term paper are straightforward. The student will complete each of the following:

1. **Introduction:** The student will describe the research question that they have set out to answer, as well as explain why the reader should care about this topic. In addition, the thesis must be stated immediately. The thesis is the student's argument in its clearest and most concise form. Every piece of evidence that follows is to be strictly subjugated towards the purpose of supporting this argument. Furthermore, the paper's **thesis statement must be written in bold**, otherwise a **penalty of 3% will be levied**. This will enhance clarity for both the author and the reader.
2. **Literature Review:** Briefly outline the various schools of thought that exist in relation to the paper's topic. Tell the reader what the body of scholarly literature already says about the research question. (Do not worry about a comprehensive survey, just inform the reader of the main streams of thought in a single paragraph or two.)
3. **Argument-Theory and Evidence:** Here the student will advance their argument (thesis) in an attempt to answer the research question they have asked. Is the existing literature useful? Why, or why not? Apply an existing theory to determine its usefulness in answering the research question. Furthermore, present all the relevant evidence in support of the thesis in as clear a manner as possible.
4. **Conclusion:** Restate the key point of the argument. What makes your evidence and logic more compelling? Highlight how and why your argument can be considered superior to the alternatives. Additionally, offer suggestions on potential policy prescriptions and where the research program should go from here.
5. **Bibliography:** Include all works cited. You must use at least 6 PEER-REVIEWED sources (books, journal articles.)

The length of the paper is 6-8 pages, 12 pt. font, double-spaced, or 2,000-2,500 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography. Include a separate cover page with the title, your name, the date, and the class name and number.

Since a 6-8 page paper does not allow for an exhaustive history or superfluous detail, be sure that all the material included is directly relevant to supporting the main thesis. Ruthless editing is required to purge all unnecessary details.

Papers will be marked primarily on the clarity and strength of their arguments, as well as the demonstrated ability to use empirical evidence in support of the thesis. I will also consider its organization, quality of sources, and writing style.

The research paper is due Thursday, April 24.

III. Expectations of Written Work

I have no preference over the format style and citation method, so long as they are consistently maintained throughout the paper.

You must utilize an appropriate citation method for all work. Please review LSU's rules on plagiarism as it is your obligation to refrain from stealing another's academic property. A good tool to assist you in correct citations is the Microsoft Word "references" function. 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.

For help with writing, visit the LSU Writing Center at Coates B-18, or call them to schedule an appointment at (225) 578-4439.

The best places to look for source material are the LSU library catalog and the article and databases search engines available at <http://lib.lsu.edu/>. Stephanie Braunstein, the political science research librarian in the Middleton Library can also be very helpful. You can contact her at or at sbraunst@lsu.edu, or (225)-578-7021. Internet searches can be useful, though quality and reliability vary greatly. Once you have found a few good sources, use them to find others, e.g., by continuing to search with the same keywords, looking in other issues of the same journal, looking through footnotes or bibliographies in books and articles, looking near a book in the stacks, or using the library catalog to search for other books with the same subject classification. Do not cite class readings, local newspapers, Wikipedia, or other encyclopedias, though you can use them for general information.