

Spring 2-1-1999

## PSC 120S.01: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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### Recommended Citation

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PSc 120 (3cr)  
*Introduction to Comparative Politics*  
Spring 1999

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and by appointment

### Course Description

Introduction to the cross-national and comparative study of contemporary political systems. Focus on structural/behavioral similarities and differences, common and diverse political aspirations/struggles, and on domestic-foreign linkages. Reference to major illustrative countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should understand patterns of governance and politics around the world, be able to explain similarities and differences among key political systems, be familiar with different theoretical and analytical approaches to the comparative study of political systems, and be capable of interpreting current events from a sound conceptual understanding and empirical grounding. This course also is intended to provide the basic grounding for advanced study of comparative politics at the upper-division level.

### Required Texts

Thomas M. Magstadt. *Nations and Governments: Comparative Politics in Regional Perspective*. [NG] Third edition. N.Y.: St. Martins, 1998.

Christian Soe (ed.). *Comparative Politics 98/99*. [CG] Guilford: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1998.

### Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete readings on schedule, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussions and debates. Assessment will be based on the following:

*Class participation* – including group discussions/debates = **30%**

*Mid-term examination* = **20%**

*Final examination* = **50%**

## Course Outline and Reading Assignments

### Part I: Overview

- 29 Jan      A. Comparing political systems  
\*NG, Chpt 1
- 1 Feb        B. Forms of government  
\*NG, Chpt 2
- 3 Feb        C. Development and underdevelopment  
\*NG, Chpt 3
- 5 Feb        D. Global and tribal tendencies  
\*CP, #54
- 8 Feb        E. *Shadows of Hate* video

### Part II: Western Europe

- 10, 12 Feb    A. Britain/France/Germany  
\*NG, pp. 81-96; Chpt 5  
\*CP, #2,3,4,6,11,13,14,15
- 17 Feb        B. The French "alternative"  
\*CP, #16,17,22,23
- 17 Feb        C. EU and Euro  
\*NG, Chpt 6
- 17,19,22 Feb    D. Debates  
\*CP, #28,30,31, 22, 23, 32, 33, 34,35,36

### Part III: Russia and East/Central Europe

- 24 Feb        A. Russia and Ukraine  
\*NG, pp. 165-168; Chpt 8; Chpt 9
- 24 Feb        B. Debate  
\*CP, #37,38
- 26 Feb        C. Post-breakup Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia  
\*\*NG, pp. 192-196, 239-253

**Part IV: *The Middle East***

- 1 March A. Israel and the Palestinian Question  
\*NG, pp. 270-277, 290-292; Chpt 12
- 1 March B. Debate  
\*CP, #37,38
- 3 March C. Iraq and Iran  
\*NG, pp. 296, 322-326
- 5 March **Mid-term examination**
- 8-12 March Group debate preparation

**Part V: *Asia***

- 22 March A. Overview  
\*NG, pp. 333-339, 361-362, 384-390
- 22, 24 March B. China  
\*NG, pp. 344-348, 364-372, 391-398
- 26 March C. Hong Kong
- 29, 31 March D. Debates  
\*CP, #45,46,48,49
- 2 April E. Japan  
\*NG, pp. 348-352, 372-376, 398-407  
\*CP, #20
- 5 April F. India  
\*NG, pp. 352-355, 377-382, 407-413  
\*CP, #47
- 7 April *Of Snakes & Software: India at Crossroads of Change* video

**Part VI: *Sub-Saharan Africa***

- 9, 12 April A. Colonialism and nationalism; contemporary political patterns  
*Poverty Complex* video  
\*NG, Chpts 16, 17,18

- 14 April B. Namibia and South Africa  
\*NG, pp. 417, 460-461, 489-492  
\*CP, #43
- 16 April C. Horn of Africa
- 16 April D. Nigeria  
\*NG, pp. 417, 458-460, 486-488
- 19, 21 April E. Debates  
\*CP, #44

**Part VII: Latin America**

- 23 April A. Overview  
\*NG, pp. 499-504, 506-516, 528-530, 536, 545-551, 567-568
- 23 April B. Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina  
\*NG, pp. 517-525, 530-535, 537-543, 556-567
- 25 April C. Debates  
\*CP, #41,42
- 28 April D. Debt, SAP, and domestic distress  
*Life and Debt* video  
\*NG, pp. 504-505, 551-556

**Part VIII: Comparative Conclusions**

- 30 April A. Devolution  
\*CP, # 27
- 30 April B. Women in power  
\*CP, #24
- 3,5,7 May C. Debates  
\*CP, #25,50,52,53,54
- 12 May Final Examination**  
(1:10-3:10)