

Spring 2-1-2000

PSC 120S.01: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Recommended Citation

Koehn, Peter, "PSC 120S.01: Introduction to Comparative Politics" (2000). *Syllabi*. 9603.
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PSc 120 (3cr)
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Spring 2000

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M 2-3; W 11-12, 2-4;
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 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 political trends 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 based on 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 = **30%**

Final examination = **40%**

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Part I: Overview

- 24-28 Jan A. Comparing political systems
*NG, Chpt 1
- 31 Jan B. Forms of government; legislative and executive structures
*NG, Chpt 2
- 2 Feb C. Development and underdevelopment
*NG, Chpt 3
- 4 Feb D. Global and tribal tendencies
*CP, #54
*Salman Rushdie, "Influence Overload" (1999)
- 7 Feb E. The individual as political actor

Part II: Western Europe

- 9, 11 Feb A. Britain/France/Germany
*NG, pp. 81-96; Chpt 5
*CP, #2,3,4,6,11,13,14.15
- 14 Feb Group debate preparation
*Pat Williams, "Generation Knowledgeable, But Inarticulate" (1999)
- 16 Feb B. The French "alternative"
*CP, #16,17,22,23
*S. Daley, "French See a Hero in War on McDomination" (1999)
*C. Marquis, "Viva La Difference, and Le Big Mac" (1999)
- 16 Feb C. EU and Euro
*NG, Chpt 6
*C. Whitney, "All Commissioners of EU Give Resignations" (1999)
- 18,23,25 Feb D. Debates 1-5
*CP, #28,30,31, 22, 23, 32, 33, 34,35,36
*W. Hage, "Swedish Party Pledging Expanded Welfare Gains" (1998)
*E. Andrews, "New Swedish Prosperity" (1999)

Part III: Russia and East/Central Europe

- 28 Feb A. Russia and Ukraine
 *NG, pp. 165-168; Chpt 8; Chpt 9
 *M. Wines, "Struggling Ukraine Teeters between East & West" (1999)
- 1 March B. Debate 6
 *CP, #37,38
 *D. Sanger, "House Testimony" (1999)
 *S. Myers, "Albright Warns Russians to Battle Corruption" (1999)
- 1 March C. Post-breakup Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia
 *NG, pp. 192-196, 239-253

Part IV: The Middle East

- 3 March A. Israel and the Palestinian Question
 *NG, pp. 270-277, 290-292; Chpt 12
 *J. Greenberg, "Likud Decides Not to Join Coalition" (1999)
- 3 March B. Debate 7
- 6 March C. Iraq and Iran
 *NG, pp. 296, 322-326
 *"Moderates Win Local Elections across Iran" (1999)
- 8 March Mid-term examination**

Part V: Asia

- 10 March A. Overview
 *NG, pp. 333-339, 361-362, 384-390
 *Indonesia news clips (1999)
 *S. Kinzer, "Caspian Lands Back Pipeline Pushed by West" (1999)
- 13, 15 March B. China
 *NG, pp. 344-348, 364-372, 391-398
 *E. Eckholm, "In China's Boom, Rural Poor ..." (1999)
- 17 March *Democracy in China: A Billion Small Voices* video
- 27 March C. Hong Kong

- 29, 31 March D. Debates 8-10
 *CP, #45,46,48,49
 **"Asian Rebound Derails Reform" (1999)
 **"Watching China's Big Board" (1999)
- 3 April E. Japan
 *NG, pp. 348-352, 372-376, 398-407
 *CP, #20
- 5 April F. India
Of Snakes & Software: India at Crossroads of Change video
 *NG, pp. 352-355, 377-382, 407-413
 *C. Dugger, "Hindu-first Party Wins Solid Victory" (1999)
 *CP, #47
- 7 April Group debate preparation

Part VI: Sub-Saharan Africa

- 10, 12 April A. Colonialism and post-colonial political patterns
Poverty Complex video
 *NG, Chpts 16, 17,18
 **"U.N. Report: Globalization Leaving Many Folks Behind" (1999)
- 14 April B. Namibia and South Africa
 *NG, pp. 417, 460-461, 489-492
 *CP, #43
 *S. Daley, "South African Names Cabinet" (1999)
 *P. Mwaura, "Namibia: making Democracy Work" (1999)
- 17 April C. Horn of Africa
- 17 April D. Nigeria
 *NG, pp. 417, 458-460, 486-488
- 19 April E. Debates 11-12
 *CP, #44

Part VII: Latin America

- 21 April A. Overview
 *NG, pp. 499-504, 506-516, 528-530, 536, 545-551, 567-568
 *L. Rohter, "Ecuadorean Concessions"

- 21 April B. Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina
 *NG, pp. 517-525, 530-535, 537-543, 556-567
 *G. Mahler, "The Mexican Political System" (2000)
 *C. Krauss, "Argentina's Switch" (1999)
- 24 April C. Debates 13-14
 *CP, #41,42
 *Venezuela news clips
- 26 April D. Debt, SAP, and domestic distress
Life and Debt video
 *NG, pp. 504-505, 551-556

Part VIII: Comparative Conclusions

- 26 April A. Nationalities, devolution, gender and politics, nonstate actors
 *CP, # 27,24
- 28 April National Conference on Undergraduate Research (no class)
- 1,3,5 May B. Debates 15-20
 *CP, #25,50,52,53,54
 *Kurdish news clips (1999)

8 May (3:20-5:20) Final Examination