Spring 2-1-2000

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

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PSc 120 (3cr)  
*Introduction to Comparative Politics*  
Spring 2000

Peter Koehn  
Office: LA 416 x5294  
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**


**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text/Author</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24-28 Jan</td>
<td>A. Comparing political systems</td>
<td>*NG, Chpt 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Jan</td>
<td>B. Forms of government; legislative and executive structures</td>
<td>*NG, Chpt 2</td>
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<td>2 Feb</td>
<td>C. Development and underdevelopment</td>
<td>*NG, Chpt 3</td>
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<td>4 Feb</td>
<td>D. Global and tribal tendencies</td>
<td>*CP, #54</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Salman Rushdie, &quot;Influence Overload&quot; (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Feb</td>
<td>E. The individual as political actor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Part II: Western Europe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text/Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9, 11 Feb</td>
<td>A. Britain/France/Germany</td>
<td>*NG, pp. 81-96; Chpt 5</td>
</tr>
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<td>*CP, #2,3,4,6,11,13,14,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Feb</td>
<td>Group debate preparation</td>
<td>*Pat Williams, &quot;Generation Knowledgeable, But Inarticulate&quot; (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Feb</td>
<td>B. The French &quot;alternative&quot;</td>
<td>*CP, #16,17,22,23</td>
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<td>*S. Daley, &quot;French See a Hero in War on McDomination&quot; (1999)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*C. Marquis, &quot;Viva La Difference, and Le Big Mac&quot; (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Feb</td>
<td>C. EU and Euro</td>
<td>*NG, Chpt 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*C. Whitney, &quot;All Commissioners of EU Give Resignations&quot; (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18, 23, 25 Feb</td>
<td>D. Debates 1-5</td>
<td>*CP, #28,30,31, 22, 23, 32, 33, 34,35,36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
*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

14 April B. Namibia and South Africa
*NG, pp. 417, 460-461, 489-492
*CP, #43

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
*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
*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