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PSCI 220S.01: Introduction to Comparative Government

Christopher P. Muste

University of Montana - Missoula, christopher.muste@umontana.edu

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PSCI 220 -- INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT
Fall 2013
MWF 10:10 - 11:00, Social Science Building 356

Professor Christopher Muste

Phone: 406-243-4829

Office: LA 416 (Liberal Arts Building, Room 416)

e-mail: christopher.muste@umontana.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 1-4, and by appointment

Political Science Department: 350 Liberal Arts; phone 406-243-5202

Teaching Assistants:

Jeremy Verhasselt Office hours: Wednesday 9-10, 347 Corbin. email: jeremy.verhasselt@umontana.edu

Nick Potratz Office hours: Friday 9-10, 345 Corbin. email: nicholas.potratz@umconnect.umt.edu

Review Sessions: Monday 9-10, in LA 202 (Jeremy); and Wednesday 11-12, in LA 334 (Nick)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the major types of political systems in different countries, and to examine the effects of different political systems on the way countries are governed and on the lives of their citizens. It will also introduce you to the main concepts and theories that political scientists use to make sense of the wide variety of political systems in the world.

The course begins by introducing and explaining the principal concepts used in comparative politics to study countries' political systems. We will then apply these concepts to analyze the main characteristics of the political systems of industrialized democracies as a group, and then more intensively analyze the similarities and differences in the political systems of three industrialized democracies – the United States, Great Britain, and France – and the emerging European Union. Next, we will examine the political systems of communist and post-communist countries, and the changes taking place in Russia and China. Then we will examine the political systems of the large group of less developed, or “third world” nations, and focus on India, Iran, and Mexico. We will conclude by exploring some of the problems and opportunities citizens and countries will likely face in the coming years.

In addition to addressing these questions, this course satisfies the General Education Social Sciences requirement. The goal of this requirement is to enable you to 1) describe the nature, structure, and historical development of human organizations and/or relationships, 2) comprehend the role of theory in explaining social phenomena, 3) generate and/or interpret social science data, 4) assess and evaluate the significance of social science phenomena.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Introductory courses are intensive by nature and build on the knowledge gained in earlier parts of the course, which means that your investment in keeping up with the class will pay off in terms of how much you will learn, how interesting class will be, and how well you will do on the exams and research paper. This requires doing the readings before each class and being prepared to contribute to class discussion and ask questions –in a large class such as this, intelligent questions and discussions are critical components of learning. There will be two midterms (each worth 25% of the course grade), an exam during finals week (25% of the course grade), and one research and analysis paper (25% of the course grade) due in mid-November. Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89.9	C+ = 77-79.9	D+ = 67-69.9	below 60=F
A- = 90-92.9	B = 83-86.9	C = 73-76.9	D = 63-66.9	
	B- = 80-82.9	C- = 70-72.9	D- = 60-62.9	

* **Makeup exams will be permitted only if I have been notified prior to the missed exam and if I agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency.**

* **All three exams and the research & analysis paper must be completed in order to pass the course.**

* **Check your calendar now to make sure you do not have any conflicts with the 3 exams scheduled.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php

The University of Montana Student Conduct Code prohibits plagiarism, which is “representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own.” This is a serious academic violation that can result in penalties up to suspension or expulsion from the University. **I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating in this course.** Read the UM plagiarism warning <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html> and Student Conduct Code above. Please contact me with any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

CLASS COURTESY:

In order to have a pleasant and effective learning environment in a class this size, we need to observe a few basic courtesies. This is a small campus, so it is possible to get to the classroom on time from all other campus buildings; arriving late or leaving early disrupts the class and disturbs other students and the instructor. **Please turn off all cell phones and all other electronic devices before class begins.** Please don’t read a newspaper or other non-course material, eat during class, or use text messaging, web browsers, or similar communications. You may take class notes using a computer but do not use it for other purposes. If you have a question or comment about the material, please raise your hand instead of discussing it with your neighbor. We’ll all benefit if we remember we’re in the room together to learn.

DROP POLICY AND INCOMPLETES:

You can drop on Cyberbear through September 16, and from September 17 to October 28 using a drop slip signed by me. Starting October 29, you must go through the more formal and difficult “late drop” petition process. I will sign late drop petitions until October 29, and after that only under extraordinary circumstances, as stated at <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html> under “Beginning the forty-sixth...” Incompletes will only be permitted when all the conditions set forth in the official University policy are met – the policy is at <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html> under “Incomplete Grade Policy”

GENERAL EDUCATION SOCIAL SCIENCES REQUIREMENT:

In order for this course to satisfy your University of Montana General Education Requirement in the Social Sciences, you must take the course for a letter grade, and must earn a C- or better.

DSS STUDENTS:

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact the DSS office in order to arrange for and provide me with a copy of your DSS letter of approval for accommodations. The DSS office is in Lommasson Center 154.

E-MAIL AND MOODLE:

Every registered UM student has an official UM e-mail account, and students registered for this course have a Moodle course account. I may use your official UM e-mail to send you important announcements, and your exam and research paper grades will be posted on Moodle. See <http://umonline.umt.edu/> for instructions on how to access your UM e-mail and Moodle accounts.

READINGS:

Most reading for this course will be from a custom textbook, with selected chapters, to save you money. The book is by Charles Hauss and Melanie Haussman, *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*, 8th edition. It is available from the UM bookstore in a special edition titled *Introduction to Comparative Government*. The book is also available online as an inexpensive e-book or for rental at <http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/isbn/9781111832551>. The textbook webpage also links to study tools - quizzes, a glossary, and flash cards - by clicking on “Free Materials” and “Access Now” I may also hand out or post online other articles for you to read at various times in the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Dates Subject to Change by the Professor

August 26 - September 4 Introduction - Chapter 1

SEPTEMBER 2, MONDAY NO CLASS DUE TO LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

September 4 - 9 Industrialized Democracies, Chapter 2

September 11 - 16 The United States, Chapter 3

September 18 - 23 Great Britain, Chapter 4

Sept. 25 & 27 France, Chapter 5

SEPTEMBER 30 - MONDAY (TENTATIVE DATE) EXAM #1 – BRING SCANTRON, ETC.

October 2 - 7 The European Union, Chapter 7

October 9 - 14 Current and Former Communist Regimes, Chapter 8

October 16 & 18 Russia, Chapter 9

October 21 Research Paper Assignment - Hand Out and Discuss (TENTATIVE)

October 21 - 25 China, Chapter 10

October 28 - MONDAY (TENTATIVE DATE) EXAM #2 – BRING SCANTRON, ETC.

October 30 – November 4 Less Developed Countries, Chapter 11

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11 NO CLASS DUE TO VETERAN'S DAY HOLIDAY

November 6 - 15 India, Chapter 12 (online)

November 18 -22 Iran , Chapter 13

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PAPER DUE IN CLASS

NOVEMBER 27 – 29, WEDNESDAY – FRIDAY NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

November 25 - December 2 Mexico, Chapter 16

December 4 & 6 Global Challenges and Domestic Responses, Chapter 17, and Review

FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 8:00 - 10:00 A.M. – BRING SCANTRON