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PSC 120.01: Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics

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PSC 120 – INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Summer 2006

Monday – Thursday, 9:30 – 11:20, 337 Liberal Arts

Professor Christopher Muste

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Office: 158 Liberal Arts

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11:20 – 12 noon and 3:20 – 4:00, and by appointment

Political Science Department - 350 Liberal Arts; phone 243-5202 (as a last resort)

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 how countries are governed and on the lives of their citizens. The course will focus on enabling you to develop a comparative understanding of political systems and the major concepts that political scientists use to make sense of the varieties of political systems that exist.

The course begins by presenting and explaining the principal concepts used in comparative politics to study countries' political systems. These concepts are next used to analyze the main features of industrialized democracies as a group, and more specifically 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 main characteristics of communist and post-communist countries, and the changes taking place in China. Then we will examine the large group of “third world” nations, and focus on India, Iran, and Mexico. We will conclude with an exploration of some of the problems and opportunities citizens and countries will likely face in the coming years.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Introductory courses, especially in summer school, are intensive by nature and build quickly on the knowledge gained in each part 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 and how interesting class will be. This requires doing the readings before each class and being prepared to contribute to class discussion and questions – even in an introductory course intelligent questions and discussions are critical components of learning. Discussion will count 5% toward the course grade, and there will be two quizzes covering some of the chapters we read in the textbook and videos we see, worth 5% each of the course grade. There will also be one research paper (10% of the course grade), two midterm exams (each worth 25% of the course grade) and a final exam (25% of the course grade).

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 & quizzes will be given only if I have been notified prior to the missed exam or quiz and if I agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency.

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

READINGS: The readings for this course will be from a textbook and a small number of articles that will be handed out or posted online for you to read at various times in the course.

The text is Charles Hauss, *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*, 5th edition, available from the U of M bookstore.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

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. See p. 22 in the *2005-2006 Catalog*, and the Student Conduct Code on the UM website at <http://www.umt.edu/sa/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321> . Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

CLASS COURTESY:

In order to have a pleasant and effective learning environment in the class, 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 before class begins. Please don’t read a newspaper or other non-course material, or eat during class. 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 just keep in mind the reason we’re in the room together.

DROP POLICY AND INCOMPLETES:

The last day to drop or add classes, or change to audit status is Friday, May 26. Incompletes will only be permitted when all the conditions set forth in the official University policy are met – the policy is on page 21 of the *University of Montana 2005-2006 Catalog*.

SOCIAL SCIENCES DISTRIBUTIONAL REQUIREMENT:

In order for this course to satisfy your University of Montana Distributional Requirement in the Social Sciences, you must take the course for a letter grade, and freshmen and other students governed by the *2005-2006 Catalog* 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 DSS in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.

E-MAIL AND BLACKBOARD:

Every registered UM student has an official UM e-mail account, and students registered for this course have a Blackboard course account. I may use your official UM e-mail to send you important announcements, and exam grades will be posted on Blackboard. See the last page of this syllabus for instructions on how to access your UM e-mail and Blackboard accounts.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

NOTE: DATES OF EXAMS, QUIZZES, AND RESEARCH PAPER MAY BE CHANGED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

Week #1: 5/22 – 5/25:

Introduction. Course overview and Industrialized Democracies: read Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Thursday, 5/25 (tentative): Quiz #1 on concepts in comparative politics, industrialized democracies, and the United States.

Week #2: 5/30 – 6/1 (No class Monday 5/29 - Memorial Day)

Comparisons of industrialized countries: Britain, France, and the U.S.: review Chapter 3 (the U.S.), and read Chapters 4 (Great Britain) and 5 (France).

Thursday, 6/1: Exam #1 Applying concepts, industrialized democracies, and country examples

Week #3: 6/5 – 6/8

A new form of industrialized democracy? Read Chapter 7 on the European Union.

Current and Former Communist countries: read Chapter 8.

Wednesday 6/7 (tentative): Quiz #2 on this week's readings.

Thursday: read Chapter 10 on China, Research Paper Assignment handed out and discussed.

Week #4: 6/12 – 6/15

Current and Former communist countries, part 2: review Chapter 10 on China.

Video: "New Leap Forward"

Tuesday, 6/13: Exam #2

Developing (?) countries, part 1: read The Third World (Chapter 11) and India (Chapter 12).

Video: "Life and Debt"

Week #5: 6/19 – 6/22

Developing countries, part 2: Iran (Chapter 13), Mexico (Chapter 16), and Conclusion (Chapter 17)

Video: "The Islamic Wave"

Monday, 6/19: Research paper Due In Class

Thursday 6/22: Last day of class and Final Exam

