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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 2005

Monday – Friday, 10:50 – 12:20, 338 Liberal Arts

Professor Christopher Muste

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 3:40 -- 4:30, and by appointment

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

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 introducing the major concepts used in comparative politics to study countries' political systems, and then applies those concepts to the United States. We then examine the main features of industrialized countries, and examine in more detail the political systems of several of these countries, their similarities and differences with the U.S., and the role of the emerging European Union. We will then examine the characteristics of communist and post-communist countries, specifically the former USSR and China. The final section of the course examines the large group of less-developed or developing nations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Summer school courses are intensive by nature, 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. There will be quizzes covering some of the chapters we read in the basic text and videos we see, and discussion and quizzes are worth 10% of the course grade. There will also be one or more research-and-response papers (10% of the course grade), as well as two midterms (each is worth 25% of the course grade) and a final exam (30% of the course grade).

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-and-response papers 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*, 4th edition, available from the U of M bookstore.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week #1: 5/23 – 5/27:

Introduction and course overview; read and discuss Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Friday, 5/27 (tentative): Quiz #1 on concepts in comparative politics, American exceptionalism, and the industrialized countries.

Week #2: 5/30 – 6/3

Initial comparisons of industrialized countries: Britain, France, and the U.S.: review Chapter 2 (the U.S.), and read Chapters 4 and 5.

Friday, 6/3, Exam #1 Applying concepts, industrialized democracies, and country examples

Week #3: 6/6 – 6/10

Wrapping up industrialized comparisons: read Chapter 7 on the European Union and Chapter 8 on Japan.

Former Communist countries: read the overview (Chapter 9).

Video: "New Leap Forward"

6/10 (tentative): Quiz #2 on this week's readings.

Week #4: 6/13 – 6/17

Former communist countries, part 2: read Chapter 10 on Russia and Chapter 11 on China.

Wednesday, 6/15, Exam #2

Developing countries, part 1 : Read introductory chapter on The Third World (Chapter 12)

Video: "Life and Debt"

Week #5: 6/20 – 6/24

Developing countries, part 2: India (Chapter 13), Iraq (Chapter 14), Mexico (Chapter 16).

Video: "The Islamic Wave"

6/24 Last day of class and Final Exam