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PSC 120.01: Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics

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PSC 120S – INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Fall 2006

MWF 12:10 – 1:00, McGill Hall 210

Professor Christopher Muste

Office: 416 Liberal Arts

Office Hours: Monday 4–6; Wednesday 1-2 and 4–5; and by appointment

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Phone: 243-4829

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Teaching Assistant: Erin Burd

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Office Hours: Monday 11-12; Friday 1-2

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 that political scientists use to make sense of the wide variety of political systems that exist.

The course begins by presenting and explaining the principal concepts used in comparative politics to study countries' political systems. We will then use these concepts to analyze the political systems 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 the former USSR and 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.

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, 3) 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 – even 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 final week (30% of the course grade), and one research and analysis paper (20% of the course grade) due near the end of the semester. 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 anything that conflicts with the exams.**

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://www.umt.edu/sa/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

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 the plagiarism warning on p. 21 in the *UM 2006-2007 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 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 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. 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:

You can drop on Cyberbear until September 18, and from then until October 9 using a drop slip signed by me. After October 9, you must go through the more formal and difficult “late drop” petition process. I will sign late drop petitions for only one week after the first exam grades are posted, and after that only under extraordinary circumstances, as outlined on p. 19 of the *UM 2006-2007 Catalog*. Incompletes will only be permitted when all the conditions set forth in the official University policy are met – the policy is on pp. 20-21 of the *University of Montana 2006-2007 Catalog*.

GENERAL EDUCATION SOCIAL SCIENCES REQUIREMENT:

In order for this course to satisfy the 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 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.

READINGS:

The main readings for this course will be from a textbook:

Charles Hauss, *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*, 5th edition, available from the UM bookstore.

I may also hand out or post online a small number of articles for you to read at various times in the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Dates Subject to Change by Professor

August 28 - Sept. 1 Introduction - Chapter 1

September 4, Monday NO CLASS TODAY DUE TO LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

September 6 - 8 Introduction, Chapter 1 - continued

September 11 - 15 Industrialized Democracies, Chapter 2

September 18 - 22 The United States, Chapter 3

September 25 - 29 Great Britain, Chapter 4

October 2 & 4 France, Chapter 5

OCTOBER 6 - FRIDAY (TENTATIVE DATE) EXAM #1 - BRING SCANTRON

October 9 Hand Out Research Paper Assignment and Discuss

October 9 - 13 The European Union, Chapter 7

October 16 - 20 Current and Former Communist Regimes, Chapter 8

October 23 & 25 Russia, Chapter 9

October 27 - Nov. 1 China, Chapter 10

NOVEMBER 3 - FRIDAY (TENTATIVE DATE) EXAM #2 - BRING SCANTRON

November 6 & 8 The Third World, Chapter 11

NOVEMBER 10, FRIDAY NO CLASS - VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY

November 13 - 17 India, Chapter 12

November 20 Iran, Chapter 13

November 22 & 24, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Nov. 27 & 29 Iran, Chapter 13 - continued

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PAPER DUE IN CLASS

December 1 - 6 Mexico, Chapter 16

December 6 & 8 Danger... and Opportunity, Chapter 17, and Course Review.

FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 8:00 - 10:00 A.M. - BRING SCANTRON

USING BLACKBOARD AND YOUR OFFICIAL UM EMAIL

Welcome to Blackboard, The University of Montana's Internet learning environment! You are enrolled in a University of Montana course that uses an online Blackboard supplement. Online supplements offer students convenience, flexibility and new approaches to learning. This letter contains important instructions for accessing Blackboard and your official university email address. Following these steps will help you to enjoy a successful educational experience.

Accessing Your Online Supplement(s) and Official UM Student Email Address

On the first day of your class, usually August 29, you may log on to the UOnline Blackboard Web site to access your course supplement. First, you must locate your Blackboard username.

To find your official university username for *Blackboard and Email*:

1. Log on to Cyberbear and click on *Personal Information*.
2. Click on *Standard UM-M Computer Access User ID (SCAUID)*. Your SCAUID is in the form of first initial, last initial followed by 6 digits (i.e. fl123456). Record your SCAUID – you will use it to log on to Blackboard and your email account.
3. Log off Cyberbear.

To find your Blackboard and Email password:

1. If you are a new student, the default SCAUID password is the last six digits of your University ID (the number on your Griz Card.) This should be entered into the password area on Blackboard and your cue1 email account.
2. If you are a returning student, your Blackboard password will be the same as your cue1 email password from last semester.
3. You may change your password at the [password change page](http://www.umt.edu/it/scauid/pwdchange) (<http://www.umt.edu/it/scauid/pwdchange>). If you are unable to log on to the password change page, or if you cannot remember the password associated with your SCAUID, please call the ITO Operations Center, 406.243.2606. Be prepared to provide your Social Security Number and University ID number to allow ITO Operations staff to verify your identity and to reset your password.

To Log on to Blackboard:

Browse to <http://umonline.umt.edu>, then click **Login**.

Enter your SCAUID and password here. Your SCAUID is your Blackboard username.

Your UOnline instructor will use your **official UM student email address**, assigned by The University of Montana, to communicate with you. Follow these steps to find and access your Official UM Student email address.

To log on to your Official UM Email Account

Browse to <http://cue1.umt.edu>. Your username and password are the same as your Blackboard username (see #1 above - *Accessing Your Online Supplement*). As of January 1, 2005, student e-mail passwords are now the last six digits of the student ID number (Griz Card number).

Student Blackboard Assistance will be provided on the first floor of the University Center during the first week of classes. Look for the UOnline table!

Questions? Need Help?

For help with your new email account or to obtain computer technical assistance, contact the IT Central Office at telephone 406.243.4357 or via email itcentral@umontana.edu

For help with your UOnline login, contact Marvin Paulson, Computer Support Specialist, at UOnline Support Services at telephone 406.243.6394 or via email courseware-support@umontana.edu