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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

Fall 2005

MWF 12:10 – 1:00, 352 Social Science Building

Professor Christopher Muste

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Office Hours: Mon 4–5; Weds 4–6; and by appointment

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

Teaching Assistant: Ozren Runic

Office: 345 Corbin Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11; Wednesday 11-12

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. 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 the former USSR and China. Then we will examine the large group of “third world” nations, and focus on India, Iraq, 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 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 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 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) and a final exam (35% of the course grade), as well as one research and analysis paper (15% 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 and analysis paper must be completed in order to pass the course.

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 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, 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:

You can drop on Cyberbear until September 19, and from then until October 10 using a drop slip signed by me. After October 10, 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 not thereafter except under extraordinary circumstances.

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.

READINGS:

The main reading 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 29 & 31 Introduction - Chapter 1

September 2, Friday NO CLASS TODAY DUE TO CONFERENCE

September 5, Monday NO CLASS TODAY DUE TO LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

September 7 & 9 Introduction, Chapter 1 - continued

September 12-16 Industrialized Democracies, Chapter 2

September 19-23 The United States, Chapter 3

September 26-30 Great Britain, Chapter 4

October 3 & 5 France, Chapter 5

OCTOBER 7 - FRIDAY (TENTATIVE DATE)

EXAM #1 – BRING SCANTRON

October 10 Research Paper Assignment and Discussion

October 10-14 The European Union, Chapter 7

October 17-21 Current and Former Communist Regimes, Chapter 8

October 24 & 26 Russia, Chapter 9

Oct. 28 - Nov. 2 China, Chapter 10

NOVEMBER 4 - FRIDAY (TENTATIVE DATE)

EXAM #2 – BRING SCANTRON

November 7 & 9 The Third World, Chapter 11

NOVEMBER 11, FRIDAY NO CLASS - VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY

November 14 - 18 India, Chapter 12

November 21 Iraq, Chapter 14

November 23 & 25, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

Nov. 28 & 30 Iraq, Chapter 14 - continued

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5 TERM PAPER DUE IN CLASS

December 2 & 5 Mexico, Chapter 16

December 7 & 9 Danger and Opportunity, Chapter 17, and Course Review.

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