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PSC 220.01: Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics

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PSCI 220 (3cr)
2010

Introduction to Comparative Government & Politics

Spring

Peter Koehn Office: LA 348 x5294 M 2-4; W 12-1; and by appointment
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Course Description

Introduction to the cross-national and comparative study of contemporary political systems. Focus on structural/behavioral similarities and differences, common and diverse aspirations/struggles, globalization and local responses, and domestic-foreign linkages. Reference to major illustrative countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia (including Central Asia), Africa, and Latin America.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should understand patterns of governance and political diversity/complexity around the world, be able to explain similarities and differences among key political institutions and the role of political culture, be familiar with different theoretical and analytical approaches to the comparative study of political systems, and be capable of interpreting current events based on sound conceptual understanding and empirical grounding. This course also is intended to provide the basic grounding for advanced study of comparative politics at the upper-division level, experience in intercultural and transnational analysis and understanding, and the basis for life-long learning about different political systems and key human concerns and aspirations.

Required Texts

(1) Charles Hauss. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. [H] Sixth edition, 2009.

(2) Fiona Yap (ed.). *Comparative Politics 09/10*. [CP] 2010

All other required readings are on e-res. Password: psci220

Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete readings on schedule, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussions and debates. Assessment will be based on the following:

Class participation (including debates) = **10%**

Journal Observation #1 (due **12 March**) = **10%**

Journal Observation #2 (due **23 April**) = **10%**

Essay quiz (**30 April**) = **10%**

First examination (**26 Feb.**) = **20%**

Second examination (**19 March**) = **20%**

Third examination (**14 April**) = **20%**

Fourth examination (**10 May**) = **20%**

The highest 3 of the 4 examination grades will be counted in determining final grades for the course. Make-up exams are only possible for documented medical reasons.

Reported final grades will reflect pluses and minuses. For credit/no-credit grading, students must attain an overall grade of D- to receive a "CR." Students must follow the *Catalog's* policy

on incompletes, disability accommodations, and plagiarism. The instructor will deny late-drop petitions (after the 45th day of instruction).

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Part I: Overview

- 25,27 Jan A. Comparing political systems
 *H, Chpt. 1
 *Lustig and Koester, "What Do You Call Someone from the United States of America?" (1996) **e-res**
- 29 Jan B. Types of political systems and political actors
 *Sodaro, "Parliamentary Government," pp. 196-204 (2008)
- 1 Feb C. Development, underdevelopment, and overdevelopment
 *Saletan, "Global Gluttony" (2006) **e-res**
- 3 Feb *Affluenza* VT07357 (59 minutes)
- 5 Feb D. The global/local vortex
 *Nye, "Globalization Is about Blending, Not Homogenization" (2002) **e-res**

Part II: Western Europe

- 8,10 Feb A. Great Britain
 *H, Chpt. 4
 *Lyall, "Britain's Unpopular Leader is Ripe Target" (2009) **e-res**
- 12,17 Feb B. France
 *H, Chpt. 5
- 19,22 Feb C. Germany
 *H, Chpt. 6
 *CP, #16
- 24 Feb Debates 1, 2
 *CP, #21
- 26 Feb First examination**
- 1 March D. EU and the New Europe
 *H, Chpt. 7
 *CP, pp. 143-144; #38
 *Erlanger, "Seeking a Sea Change, Green Coalition Gathers Strength" ('09) **e-res**
- 3 March Debate 3

Part III: Russia and Central Asia

- 3,5 March A. Russia
 *H, pp. 203-215; Chpt. 9
 *CP, #15

8 March B. Post-Soviet States
*H, pp. 215-218

10 March Debate 4

Part IV: *The Global South*

10 March A. Colonial legacy; inequalities
*H, Chpt. 11
*Payne and Nassar, "Global & Domestic Inequalities" (2003), pp. 88-95 **e-res**
*Sengupta, "Inside gate, India's Good Life; Outside, Servants' Slums" ('08) **e-res**

12 March B. Ethnic politics
*Payne & Nassar, "Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, & Conflict Resolution" ('03) **e-res**
*Chua, "An Explosive Combination" ('03) **e-res**

12 March Debate 5

15,17 March C. Military rule and semi-authoritarian states
*Mydans, "Myanmar Constitution Guidelines Ensure Military Power" ('07) **e-res**
*Lintner, "Goons of Rangoon" (2007) **e-res**
*CP, #11, 5
*Kagan, "Free Elections Come First" (2007) **e-res**

17 March Debate 6

19 March Second examination

22,24 March D. Iran
*H, Chpt. 13
*Sodaro, "Power in Iran" (2008) **e-res**
*CP, #17, 23
*Slackman, "Iran's Powerful Top Cleric" (2006) **e-res**
*Slackman, "Hard-Line Force Extends Control of Iran's Society" (2009) **e-res**

24,26 March E. Afghanistan and Iraq
*Sodaro, "Conditions for Democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq," pp. 246-268 (2008) **e-res**
*Bayoumi, "Confessions of an Arab Mind" (2004) **e-res**
*Brinkerhoff, "Local versus Central" (2007) **e-res**

26 March F. Democratic Transitions and Regressions
*CP, #6, 7
*Diamond, "Democratic Rollback: Resurgence of the Predatory State" ('08) **e-res**
*Graham, "Morocco" (2007) **e-res**

5 April *Hugo Chavez* DVD01879 (54 minutes)
*CP, #13
*Romero, "Chavez Scores Victory in Bid To Lift Term Limits" (2009) **e-res**

- 7 April G. Mexico
*H, Chpt. 16
*CP, #18
- 9 April H. South Africa
*Sodaro, "Democracy in South Africa" pp. 792-795 (2008) **e-res**
An Irresistible Vision: Mandella (DVD00825)
- 12 April Debates 7, 8
*Friedman, "Democracy's Root: Diversity" (2007) **e-res**
- 14 April Third examination**
- 16 April No class. *Attend National Conference on Undergraduate Research.*

Part V: China

- 19-21 Ap A. China's political system
*H, Chpt. 10
*CP, #19, 33
*Wines, "In China, No Plans to Emulate West's Way" (2009) **e-res**
*Lee, "China to Join Top 3 Economies" (2007) **e-res**
- 23 April *The New Leap Forward: CCP in the 21st Century* DVD00844 (52 minutes)
- 26 April *Democracy in China: A Billion Small Voices* video VT09008 (30 minutes)
- 26 April B. *Hong Kong, SAR*
*Jacobs, "Memo from Hong Kong" (2009) **e-res**
- 28 April C. Democracy in comparative perspective
*CP, #1, 3, 4, 8, 32
*Ottaway, "Tyranny's Full Tank" (2005) **e-res**
*Weinthal & Luong, "Combating the Resource Curse" (2008) **e-res**
- 30 April Essay Quiz**

Part VI: Nigeria

- 3,5 May B. Nigeria
*H, Chpt 15
- 5 May Debate 9

Part VII: Big questions of contemporary comparative politics

- 7 May A. Gender and politics
*CP, #24, 25
*Hunt, "Women in Peacemaking" (2002) **e-res**
Debate 10
- Debate 11

10 May (3:20-4:20) Fourth Examination

This syllabus is presented as a general guide to the course that is subject to amendment or deviation.
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