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PSC 120.01: Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics

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PSc 120 (3cr) *Introduction to Comparative Government & Politics* Spring 2006
Peter Koehn Office: LA 416 x5294 M 2-4; W 12-12:30, 2-3:30; 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 and the basis for life-long learning about different political systems and key human concerns.

Required Texts

- (1) Charles Hauss. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. [H] Fifth edition, 2006.
(2) Christian Soe (ed.). *Comparative Politics 05/06*. [CP] 2006.
All other required readings are on e-res. Password: psc120

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 (due dates **8 March & 24 April**) = 15%
First examination (**22 Feb.**) = 25%
Second examination (**15 March**) = 25%
Third examination (**7 April**) = 25%
Fourth examination (**8 May**) = 25%
(the highest 3 of the 4 exam grades will be counted in determining final grades for the course)

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." See the *Catalog's* policy on incompletes, disability accommodations, and plagiarism. The instructor will deny late-drop petitions (after the 31st day of instruction).

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Part I: Overview

- 23,25 Jan A. Comparing political systems
 *H, Chpt. 1
 *Lustig and Koester, "What Do You Call Someone from the United States of America? (1996)
- 27 Jan B. Types of political systems and political actors
 *H., Chpt. 2
- 30 Jan C. Development, underdevelopment, and overdevelopment
- 1 Feb D. The global/local vortex
 *CP, #45

Part II: Western Europe

- 3,6 Feb A. Great Britain
 *H, Chpt. 4
 *CP, #1, 2, 3
- 8,10 Feb B. France
 *H, Chpt. 5
 *CP, #4, 5, 6
- 13,15 Feb C. Germany
 *H, Chpt. 6
 *CP, #8
 *Landler, "German Coalition is Declared" (2005)
- 17 Feb Debates 1, 2
 *CP, #21
- 22 Feb **First examination**
- 24 Feb D. EU and the New Europe
 *H, Chpt. 7
 *CP, #23, 24, 25
- 27 Feb Debate 3

Part III: Russia and Central Asia

- 27 Feb., A. Russia
 *H, Chpt. 9
 *CP, #26, 27
- 1 March
- 3 March B. Post-Soviet States
 *H, pp. 216-223
 *Chivers, "Kazakh President Reelected: Voting Flawed" (2005)

6 March Debate 4

Part IV: The "South"

6 March A. Colonial legacy; inequalities
 *H, Chpt. 11
 *Payne and Nassar, "Global & Domestic Inequalities" (2003)
Battle of Algiers DVD (view 17 April, 7-9:30 pm)

8 March B. Ethnic politics
 * Payne and Nassar, "Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, and Conflict Resolution" ('03)

8 March Debate 5

10,13 March C. Military rule and semi-authoritarian states

13 March Debate 6

15 March Second examination

17,20 March D. Iran
 *H, Chpt. 13
 *Slackman, "Iran's Reformists Link Defeat to a Split from the Poor" (2005)

22 March E. Iraq
 *H, Chpt. 14

24 March F. Islam & Politics
Islamic Wave video (VT11289) 50 minutes
 *CP, #37
 *Nye, "Easy Does It: Soft Power is Vital in Fighting Terrorism" (2004)

3 April G. Mexico
 *H, Chpt. 16
 *CP, # 28

5 April H. South Africa
An Irresistible Vision: Mandela (DVD00825)
 *CP, #29

7 April Third examination

10 April Debate 7

10 April Debate 8

Part V: China

12-19 Ap A. China's political system
 *H, Chpt. 10
 *CP, #31, 32, 33

17 April *The New Leap Forward: CCP in the 21st Century* (DVD00844) 52 mins

21 April B. Democracy in China?
 *R. Scalapino, "Will China Democratize?"
 Democracy in China: A Billion Small Voices video (30 minutes)

You decide: The size and educational level of its population preclude the possibility of democracy in the China mainland in the foreseeable future.

24 April C. Hong Kong

Part VI: Nigeria

26,28 April B. Nigeria
 *H, Chpt 15
 *CP, #30

28 April Debate 9

Part VII: Big questions of contemporary comparative politics

1 May A. Gender and politics
 *CP, #14, 15
 Debate 10
 *Hunt, "Women in Peacemaking" (2002)
 You decide: Responsibility for peace making in war-torn countries should be turned over exclusively to women

3 May B. Democracy in comparative perspective
 *CP, #11, 13, 18, 38, 39, 44
 *A Third World Point of View on the [2000 U.S. Pres.] Election" (2000)
 *Ottaway, "Tyranny's Full Tank" (2005)
 *Bilmes, "The Trillion-dollar War" (2005)
 Debates 11, 12

5 May C. Global & comparative politics
 *H, Chpt. 17
 *CP, #42
 *Bayoumi, "Confessions of an Arab Mind" (2004)
 *Koehn, "Cross-national Competence and U.S.-Asia Interdependence" (2001)
 You decide 1: Globalism will trump localism/tribalism in the 21st Century
 You decide 2: State strength is more important than the scope of state connections
 You decide 3: Both domestically and in a country's foreign policies, ethnic & cultural issues should be informed and guided by collaborative opportunities rather than by false divisions.

8 May (3:20-4:20) **Fourth Examination**