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PSC 120.01: Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics

Peter Koehn

University of Montana - Missoula, peter.koehn@umontana.edu

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PSc 120 (3cr) *Introduction to Comparative Govt & Politics* Spring 2004
Peter Koehn Office: LA 416 x5294 M 2-4; W 12-12:30, 2-3:30; and by appointment
TAs: Marian Palaia palaia.marian@umontana.edu (Corbin 347; T Th 2:00-3:00)
Maya Russell mayarussell2003@yahoo.com (Corbin 345; M & W 3:30-4:30)

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, Africa, and Latin America.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should understand patterns of governance and political diversity and 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 other political systems and human concerns.

Required Texts

Monte Palmer, *Comparative Politics: Political Economy, Political Culture, and Political Independence*. [P] Second edition. 2001

Christian Soe (ed.). *Comparative Politics 03/04*. [CP] Guilford: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 2004.

All other 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 **22 March & 30 April**) = 15%

First examination = 25%

Second examination = 25%

Third examination = 25%

Final examination = 25%

(the highest 3 of the 4 exam grades will be counted in determining final grades for the course)

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Part I: Overview

- 26, 28 Jan A. Comparing political systems
 *P, pp. 3-12, 35-36
 *Lustig and Koester, "What Do You Call Someone from the United States of America?" (1996)
- 30 Jan B. Forms of government; legislative and executive structures; political actors
 *P., pp. 13-27
- 2 Feb C. Political economy; development and underdevelopment
 *P, pp. 27-32, 44-45
- 4 Feb D. The global/local vortex
 *P, pp. 36-39
 *CP, #47, 30

Part II: *Western Europe*

- 6, 9 Feb A. Britain
 *P, pp. 51-52, 57-89
 *CP, pp. 2-6, #1,3,4,5
- 11, 13 Feb B. France
 *P, pp. 93-94, 101-132
 *CP, pp. 6-7, #6, 7
- 18, 20 Feb C. Germany
 *P, pp. 137-138, 144-174
 *CP, pp. 8-11, #9, 10
- 20 Feb Debate 1
 *CP, #20
- 23 Feb Debate 2
 23 Feb Review
- 25 Feb First examination**
- 27 Feb D. EU and the New Europe
 *P, pp. 39-44
 *CP, #23, 24, 25, 26, 27
- 1 March Debate 3

Part III: Russia and Central Asia

- 1, 3 Mar A. Russia
 *P, pp. 223-224, 231-264
 *CP, #28, 29
- 5 March B. Post-Soviet Central Asia
- 5 March *Poverty Complex* video (24 min)

Part IV: The "South"

- 8 Mar A. Colonial legacy; inequalities
 *Payne and Nassar, "Global & Domestic Inequalities" (2003)
- 8 Mar Review
- 10 March Second examination**
- 12 Mar *Life and Debt* video (48 min)
- 15 Mar Debates 4, 5
- 17 March B. Ethnic conflicts
 *Payne and Nassar, "Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict, and Conflict Resolution" ('03)
- 17 March Debate 6
- 19 March C. Military rule
- 19 Mar D. Semi-authoritarian states
 *Ottaway, "Facing the Challenge of Semi-authoritarian States" (2003)
- 22 Mar E. Islam & Politics
 *CP, #42
Islamic Wave video (VT11289) 50 minutes
- 24, 26 Mar F. Iran
 *CP, #41
Mrs President video (VT11800) first 20-30 minutes (Khatami speech)
- 5, 7 April F. Democratic (and externally imposed) transitions
 *CP, #31, 33, 43
- 9 April Debates 7, 8
 *CP, #22
- 12 April Debate 9
- 12 April Review

14 April Third examination**Part V: China**

16,19,21 Ap A. China's political system
 *P, pp. 269-307
 *CP, #35,36,37,38

23 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.

23 April C. Hong Kong

Part VI: Mexico & Nigeria

26 April A. Mexico
 *P, pp. 359-361, 368-399
 *CP, # 32

28,30 April B. Nigeria
 *P, pp. 441-474
 *CP, #34

30 April Debate 10

Part VII: Big questions of contemporary comparative politics

3 May A. Gender and politics
 *CP, #16, 17
 Debate 11
You decide: Responsibility for peace making in war-torn countries should be turned over exclusively to women
 *Hunt, "Women in Peacemaking" (2002)

5 May B. Democracy in comparative perspective
 *CP, #13,18,19,44,45
 *A Third World Point of View on the [2000 U.S. Pres.] Election" (2000)
 Debate 12

7 May C. Global & comparative politics
 Debate 13
 *Wolfe and Klausen, "Other People" (2000)
You decide 1: Globalism will trump localism/tribalism in the 21st Century
You decide 2: State sovereignty will survive globalization in the 21st Century
 *Koehn, "Cross-national Competence and U.S.-Asia Interdependence" (2001)

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