

# **Introduction to Comparative Politics**

**Poli 2053**

**Fall 2011**

**117 TUREAUD HALL**

**12:10-1:30 T TH**

Instructor : James Gilley

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Office Hours: 2-3 T Th, 10-12 W

## **Course Description**

This General Education course is designed to introduce lower level undergraduate students to the subfield in Political Science of Comparative Politics. This field looks at the domestic political institutions which make up the governments of the world. This course will introduce students to several useful tools and concepts which can be used to examine the governments of foreign countries. These tools will also be applied to several countries, allowing students to see these concepts in action in the world today. Students should also gain an understanding of the levels of association ranging from friends and family to civilizations of global significance and an understanding of the diversity of cultures across time and space, as well as universal social characteristics and global networks. As this is an introductory course, no prior Political Science classes are required in order to succeed.

## **Course Requirements**

The graded work for this class will fall into 3 categories : Exams, Quizzes, and Papers

1) There will be two exams given in this class: October 6 in class and December 8 at 12:30pm. Each of these exams will be worth 30% of your final grade for a total of 60%. The format will be multiple choice, short answer, and short essay.

2) There will be one quiz each week. These quizzes will cover both the material for the week and current events questions. These quizzes will make up a total of 20% of your final grade.

3) The paper will take the form of a plan of government paper, derived from reading a work of fiction and describing the government featured in the novel. This will test student's abilities to examine the linkages of complex systems given broad strokes of information. Further detail will be forthcoming. This paper is worth 20% of your final grade.

EXAM 1 30%

EXAM 2 30%

QUIZZES 20%

PAPER 20%

TOTAL 100%

**Makeups will only be available for medical emergencies with a physician's note and participation in University Sponsored or military affiliated events with official notification provided in advanced.**

There will be bonus opportunities announced throughout the semester. Further details will be forthcoming, so stay tuned.

The grading for this class will be conducted on the 10 point scale.

A= 100-90 B= 89-80 C= 79-70 D= 69-60 F= 59-0

### **Required Text**

**Comparative Politics Today: A World View** by G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Russell J. Dalton, Kaare Strom. Pearson Education, 2011. ISBN 0205109136

This book should be available at all campus booksellers as well as online. While this book is the 10<sup>th</sup> edition, the 9<sup>th</sup> edition should also suffice.

As it is very important to be aware of world events, students are also required to read the news from a well-regarded source. The preferred sources from which the current events questions will be drawn are BBC News, the New York Times, and the International Herald Tribune. All of these have online versions, and students are expected to stay apprised of events in the world every day.

Further supplemental material will be provided as needed, placed on the moodle page for the class.

### **Special Notice**

As attendance and participation in class are highly important to student success, **Laptops, mobile devices such as iPads, and Cellphones are banned during class time.** The only exception to this is in the event of a specific dispensation from the office of Disability Services. I am well aware of the benefits and drawbacks of using laptops in class, and have come to the decision that they are not worth the trouble they cause in a classroom.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated, and all matters will be automatically referred to judicial affairs. All students must know and abide by LSU's plagiarism policy.  
<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm>

## Schedule

Week 1 Aug 23&25- Introduction, What is Comparative Politics, What is a State

Week 2 Aug 30&Sept 1- Leadership Selection and Voting Regimes (PR v Majoritarianism) *August 29 is the last day to drop without a W*

Week 3 Sept 6& 8- Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Semipresidentialism

Week 4 Sept 13- Types of Authoritarian Regimes

Sept 15- NO CLASS

Week 5 Sept 20 &22 – Party Systems and Cleavages

Week 6 Sept 27 & 29- Democratization and Development (The Political Economy)

Week 7 Oct 4&6 – Catch up, Exam Review, Exam 1

Week 8 Oct 11- England (Majoritarian Parliaments)

Oct 13 – No Class (Fall Break)

Week 9 Oct 18&20- England continued and France (Semipresidentialism)

Week 10 Oct 25&27 – Germany (PR)

Week 11 Nov 1 & 3- Russia (Semipresidentialism?) *November 4 is the last day to drop/ withdraw from the university*

Week 12 Nov 8 & 10- China (Party Authoritarianism)

Week 13 Nov 15 & 17- Iran (Fundamentalism)

Week 14 Nov 22- Singapore (Modern Fascism)

Nov 24- NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Week 15 Nov 29 & Dec 1- Mexico (Regime in Transition to Democracy) Paper due beginning of class Nov 29.

Week 16- Dec 8- FINAL EXAM 12:30pm

Readings will be assigned at the end of class, due in time for the beginning of the next class. Any supplemental readings will be placed on the moodle page for the class. This syllabus is subject to change based on events in the world, as well as the speed with which we are able to cover the material. The graded assignments, however, are not subject to change, and the dates on these are firm. Please refer to my previously stated policy regarding makeups.