2013

120-01-02 Department of Political Science

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Department of Political Science  
POLI 120: Comparative Government and Politics  
Fall 2013

Credit Hours: 3  
Class meets from 9:00-9:50am/10:00-10:50am MWF @ Hailstones Hall 7  
Instructor: Dr. Bin Yu  
Office: 708 Schott  
Office Hours: 3:00-4:00pm, MWF; and by appointment.  
Phone: (513) 745-2086  
Email: Yub@Xavier.edu

I. Course Description:  
This course introduces key concepts, theoretical frameworks, and analytical methods commonly used today in comparative politics. It examines the various ways in which governments operate and the ways people behave in political life. Meanwhile, we aim to obtain a broad global comparison by drawing upon political realities in countries all over the world. In particular, we focus on political realities in the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and Iran. In the process of our investigation, we will explore topics such as economic development, democratization, political culture, civil society and social capital, ethnic and religious conflict, and the challenges posed to domestic politics by globalization.

II. Course Objectives:  
By the end of the semester, students should:  
- be able to grasp key concepts, theoretical frameworks, and analytical methods in comparative politics  
- be more familiar with world affairs and be able to follow current events more knowledgeably  
- be able to identify and engage themselves in solving global political and economic problems  
- enhance their critical thinking skills

III. Textbooks:  
* Supplementary readings are available on Blackboard.

IV. Important Dates:  
September 18 (Wednesday): deadline to sign up for multi-media Project  
October 2 (Wednesday): deadline to submit project proposal  
October 18(Friday): midterm exam
December 16 (Monday, 10am class)/December 18 (Wednesday, 9am class): final exam

V. Tests and Writing Assignments:
Your grade is comprised of five parts—class participation, two announced quizzes, a midterm exam, a multi-media project, and a final exam.

- Class Participation (10%):
  Participation is an integral part of this course. Students are expected to attend class and to be prepared to discuss the readings, questions raised in lectures, and current events. Grading criteria include the ability to answer questions asked in class about assigned readings and the ability to ask and answer questions in ways that raise the level of discussion and help other students to learn. I encourage you to contact me after class with any questions, concerns, and ideas about this course. Throughout the semester, you are allowed to have one unexcused absences, any additional absence, if unexcused by me, will downgrade your overall course grade one half letter grade.

- Quizzes (10%):
  There will be two announced quizzes throughout the semester. Students are expected to review course materials before taking quizzes, which will be based on course materials taught during previous weeks.

- Midterm exam (25%)
  There will be a midterm exam comprised of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions.

- Multi-Media Project (25%)
  In order to enhance your critical thinking and presentation skills, you are required to finish a multi-media project.
  - Topics will involve a significant question relevant to comparative politics.
  - Each and every student must work in a group of 3 people.
  - Each group must sign up for a country and a presentation date by January 30 (Wednesday).
  - A project proposal must be submitted on October 2 (Wednesday). Before you can proceed with the project, the proposal must be approved by me.
  - Each group expected to conduct a research, collect relevant information, make a PowerPoint, and present the findings.
  - Each group will take 15-20 minutes to present the project. The group is also expected to respond to questions and comments from the audiences.
  - All group members must participate in every step of the of this research project: conducting the research, collecting the information, making the PowerPoint, presenting the findings, and responding to questions and comments.
  - A hard copy of the PowerPoint is due on the day of the presentation. An electronic copy should be sent to me at: Yub@Xavier.edu.

- Final Exam (30%)— The final exam will cover all course materials. It will be comprised of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions.
VI. Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1. Politics and Comparative Politics
Monday 8/26. Introduction of the Course
- No reading assignment
Wednesday 8/28 & Friday 8/30. Issues in Comparative Politics
- Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28) in Comparative Politics Today

Week 2. Comparing Political Systems
Monday 9/2. Labor Day
- No class
Wednesday 9/4. Why We Compare? How We Compare
- Chapter 2 (pp. 29-43) in Comparative Politics Today
Friday 9/6. An introduction to Critical Thinking I
- * Part of chapter 3 (pp. 60-79) in Comparative Politics

Week 3. How to Think Critically?
Monday 9/9. An introduction to Critical Thinking II
- * Part of Chapter 3 (pp. 80-97) in Comparative Politics
Wednesday 9/11. Lab I
- No reading assignment
Friday 9/13. The UK I
- Part of chapter 8 (pp. 151-162)

Week 4.
Monday 9/16 & Wednesday 9/18. The UK II
- Part of chapter 8 (pp. 163-181)
- Sign up for MMP on September 18 (Wednesday)
Friday 9/20. Political Culture and Political Socialization
- Chapter 3 (pp. 44-60) in Comparative Politics Today

Week 5.
Monday 9/23. The UK III
- Part of chapter 8 (pp. 182-195) in Comparative Politics Today
Wednesday 9/25.
Friday 9/27. Lab II
- No reading assignment

Week 6.
Monday 9/30 & Wednesday 10/2 & Friday 10/4. Russia I & Russia II
- Part of chapter 12 (pp. 334-351) in Comparative Politics Today
- MMP proposal due on October 2nd (Wednesday)

Week 7.
Monday 10/7. Fall Break
- No class
Wednesday 10/9 & Friday 10/11. Russia III
- Part of chapter 12 (pp. 352-379) in Comparative Politics Today

Week 8.
Monday 10/14. Interest Articulation
- Chapter 4 (pp. 61-78) in Comparative Politics Today
Wednesday 10/16. Lab III
- No reading assignment
Friday 10/18. Midterm Exam
- Please bring a blue book and pen

Week 9.
Monday 10/21. Video Day
- The Gate of Heavenly Peace
- Part of chapter 13 (pp. 380-388) in Comparative Politics Today
Wednesday 10/23 & Friday 10/25. China I
- Part of chapter 13 (pp. 389-398) in Comparative Politics Today

Week 10.
Monday 10/28 & Wednesday 10/30. China II
- Part of chapter 13 (pp. 399-425) in Comparative Politics Today
Friday 11/1. China III

Week 11.
Monday 11/4. Interest Aggregation and Political Parties
- Chapter 5 (pp. 79-99) in Comparative Politics Today
Wednesday 11/6 & Friday 11/8. Iran I
- Part of chapter 16 (pp. 520-540).

Week 12.
Monday 11/11. Iran II
Week 13.
Monday 11/18. Islam and Democracy
Wednesday 11/20. Religion as a Belief System
- *Berger, Peter L. ed. The De-secularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics,
Friday 11/22. Clash of Civilizations?

Week 14.
  chapter 1 (Selected).
Wednesday 11/27 & Friday 11/29. Thanksgiving Holiday
- No class

Week 15. Presentations of Multi-media Project
Monday 12/2, Wednesday 12/4, & Friday 12/6.

Week 16. Presentations of Multi-media Project
Monday 12/9 & Wednesday 12/11

Week 17. Final Exam
- 9am class: 10:00 to 11:50am on December 16 (Monday)
- 10am class: 8:00 to 9:50am on December 18 (Wednesday)
VII. Grading Policy

The following grade scale will be used in this course: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, and F = Below 60. There is no curving or dropping of grades in this class. For a reference to the standards for these grades, see the Department of Political Science and Sociology Grading Guidelines provided below:

A- to A = Superior critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Detailed understanding of course readings. Generally clear, well-organized writing that develops important issues in a thoughtful way. Analysis of texts is without technical or factual errors. An excellent essay will significantly surpass the expectations of a good essay by demonstrating critical mastery of the logic, assumptions, and evidence of research sources. Excellent use of quotations and proper citation of texts.

Class discussion is frequent and thoughtful; shows a very good grasp of the issues.

B- to B+ = Good to Very Good critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Solid understanding of course readings. Generally clear, well-organized writing that reports important issues in some detail. Analysis of texts is generally without technical or factual errors. A good to very good essay will have a thesis, define and incorporate concepts appropriately, present a coherent argument, and make a persuasive case for its thesis using convincing evidence; it may also need to consider plausible and reasonable alternatives systematically. Good use of quotations and proper citation of texts.

Class discussion is regular and helpful; shows a solid grasp of the issues.

C- to C+ = Adequate critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Basic understanding of course readings. Generally competent writing that identifies important issues but leaves them insufficiently explained or examined. Analysis of texts may be technically or factually defective in minor ways. An adequate essay will have a thesis, define and incorporate concepts appropriately, and present a coherent argument. Correct use of quotations and citation of texts.

Class discussion is occasional and generally adequate; may reveal some misunderstanding of the issues.

D- to D+ = Inadequate critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Poor or incompetent understanding of course readings. Below average writing that omits or misunderstands important issues. Analysis of texts may be technically or factually defective in substantial ways. An inadequate essay may not have a clear thesis, or may not define and incorporate concepts appropriately, or it may not present a coherent argument. There may be ineffective use of quotations and inadequate citation of texts.

Class discussion is infrequent; may reveal a lack of engagement with the issues or serious misunderstanding.

F = Unacceptable. No serious engagement of course readings. An unacceptable essay shows little or no serious attempt to understand important issues. Writing is unclear, or unorganized, or undeveloped to the degree that the essay is deemed a failure. Analysis of texts may contain egregious errors. There may be a failure to cite texts.

Class discussion is infrequent and ill informed; reveals no real understanding of even basic issues.