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120-01-02 Comparative Politics

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Course Title: Comparative Politics  
Course Number: POLI 120-01 (90578) & POLI 120-02 (90580)

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Office Hours: TH: 11:30-1:30

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 of political institutions, processes, and outcomes 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 explore topics such as economic development, democratization, political culture, political ideology, political violence, and globalization. This course fulfills requirements in the Political Science major, the Political Science minor, the International Studies major and the International Studies minor. In addition, the course is a social science elective in the Xavier Core Curriculum.

Course Learning 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.
- be able to think more critically.

As part of the Xavier Core Curriculum, this course aims to develop people of learning and reflection, integrity and achievement, in solidarity for and with others. In addition to the objectives described above, the course addresses the following core learning objectives at the introductory level:

- 1a: Students recognize and cogently discuss significant questions in the humanities, arts, and the natural and social sciences.
- 5a: Students examine the diverse, complex and interdependent nature of people in the world.
- 4a: Students describe and examine the multifaceted character of society and how the inclusion of different perspectives can influence one’s worldview

Course Materials


* All supplementary readings are available on Canvas.
Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for this course. If you will miss class please inform me ahead of time via email. If absences occur for medical reasons students are required to provide documentation. If religious observance will cause you to be absent from class or otherwise affect your ability to complete academic assignments, you must notify the instructor in advance and make necessary arrangements to complete the entire course.

Assessment of Student Performance

Grading Scale

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.

**Academic Integrity**

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited, as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own. You should be aware of the University policy on Academic Honesty, http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/Xaviers-Policy-on-Academic-Honesty.cfm

Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course, and expulsion from the University” Your instructor may use plagiarism detecting software, such as Turn-It-In, to review your written assignments.

**Inclusivity Statement**

I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and in which all students feel comfortable and safe to learn. In order to build a classroom community I ask that students:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs;
- be open to the views of others;
- honor the uniqueness of their peers;
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community;
- communicate in a respectful manner;
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature;
- utilize this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the Xavier community.

**University Policies**

**Incomplete Policy:**

Course assignments are due at the time specified by the instructor. Extension of time beyond the termination of the course is rarely granted and only for a serious reason. If an extension of time is granted, the grade of “I” (Undergraduate Incomplete) will be assigned and calculated as an “F” in the grade point average. Unless the work is completed and submitted by the fifteenth calendar day of the academic semester following the course, the student will fail the course and the “I” will be permanently changed to an “F” (Summer term is excluded). Exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the appropriate dean prior to that date. The faculty member initiates the grade change process once the student has made up the incomplete work. Deadlines for short-term courses may vary; please refer to program handbook or director.
Copyright Policy

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit the library copyright Web page. You can also request copyright help from the library if you have specific questions.

Xavier University course sites contain copyrights held by the instructor, other individuals or institutions. Such material is used for educational purposes in accord with copyright law and/or with permission given by the owners of the original material. You may download one copy of the materials on any single computer for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes only, provided that you (1) do not modify it, (2) use it only for the duration of this course, and (3) include both this notice and any copyright notice originally included with the material. Beyond this use, no material from the course web site may be copied, reproduced, re-published, uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the permission of the original copyright holder. The instructor assumes no responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material placed on the web site.

University Policy Regarding Gender-based Discrimination and Violence

Xavier University seeks to provide an environment that is free from discrimination based on sex and/or gender. If you have experienced sex discrimination, including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, or sexual harassment, we encourage you to seek support from Xavier’s confidential Advocacy & Prevention Coordinator and to report to Xavier’s Chief Title IX Officer and/or Xavier University Police Department. Xavier faculty is committed to supporting students and promoting a safe, respectful environment. Therefore, if a student shares information regarding sex discrimination with a Xavier faculty member, that faculty member will share this information with Xavier’s Chief Title IX Officer so that she can provide you with comprehensive information on your rights, options, and available resources. When sharing information with a faculty member, you may choose to withhold identifying information until you have spoken to a confidential resource to learn all options and resources. For a list of confidential and non-confidential resources, please see http://www.xavier.edu/titleix/documents/22015-16XavierGender-BasedSexualMisconductReportingSupportOptions.pdf.

Learning Assistance Center

The Office of Academic Support offers tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), and study groups. For information about these services, contact Stephanie Daniels at 745-3214 or danielss3@xavier.edu. The OAS is located on the fifth floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Suite 514.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should notify the course instructor and contact Cassandra Jones in the Office of Disability Services at 745-3280 or e-mail jonesc20@xavier.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Mental Health Resources

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. McGrath Counseling Services (located in the McGrath Health and Wellness Center) and the Psychological Services Center (located at the Sycamore House) help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. McGrath Counseling Services and the Psychological Services Center
are staffed by therapists, counselors, and other staff who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at http://www.xavier.edu/health-wellness/counseling/index.cfm and http://www.xavier.edu/psychologicalservices/welcome.cfm or by calling (513) 745-3022 for McGrath or (513) 745-3531 for Psychological Services Center.

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers free one-on-one tutoring on writing assignments for all Xavier students. Students can contact the Center at 745-2875 to set up an appointment. The Writing Center is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 400. http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/