

Political Science 120: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2015

TT 8:30– 9:45 AM

White 207

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The comparative study of political systems is a fundamental branch of political science. In this course students learn the concepts and methods used in comparative politics, and will use them to study the political institutions and processes of six countries: Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, and Mexico. These cases are chosen to represent different types of political system: multi-party liberal democracies of the parliamentary and presidential types, developing countries, and transitional regimes. We shall apply the concepts of comparative politics to analyze the way different political systems deal with issues such as immigration, ethnic diversity, and religious pluralism.

Text:

Almond, Powell, Dalton, and Strom, *Comparative Politics Today: A World View* (10th edition) (Pearson Longman, 2012) [CPT]

Supplementary readings will also be assigned and will be available on Reserves Direct through Woodruff Library and on the course Blackboard site.

Particulars:

One mid-term and one final exam. Both will combine short answers with essay questions. In addition, students will be required to write one 5-page paper. The paper will be due on the last day of class, December 11, 2012. See below for details.

The mid-term exam and the paper will be weighted approximately 30% each, and the final exam 40%, in determining the final grade.

Topics and readings.

- Aug 30. Introduction to the course.
- Sept. 4. The Field of Comparative Politics. Read: CPT chs. 1-2
- Sept 6. Socialization and Political Culture. Read: CPT, ch. 3
- Sept. 11. Interest Articulation and Participation. Read: CPT, ch. 4
- Sept 13. Parties and Interest Aggregation. CPT, ch. 5
- Sept 18. Government and Policymaking. Read: CPT, chs. 6-7
- Sept. 20. Politics in Britain 1. Read: CPT, pp. 152-173
- Sept 25. Britain 2. Read: CPT, pp. 173-185
- Sept. 27. Britain 3. Read: CPT, pp. 185-195
- Oct. 2. Policy issues: social integration. Read: Martin A. Schain. "Managing Difference: Immigrant Integration Policy in France, Britain and the United States," *Social Research* 77:1 (spring 2010), pp. 205-236.

- Oct. 4. Politics in France 1. Read: CPT, pp. 197-227
- Oct. 9. France 2. Read: CPT, pp. 227-243.
- Oct. 11. France 3. Read: Ahmet T. Kuru, "Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe: Analyzing French Exceptionalism," *Comparative Politics* 41:1 (October 2008), pp. 1-19 [on Reserves Direct]
- Oct. 18. Midterm review
- Oct. 23. Midterm exam
- Oct. 25. Politics in Germany 1. Read: CPT, pp. 245-280
- Oct. 30. Germany 2. Read: CPT, pp. 280-293
- Nov. 1. Germany 3: Read: J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer, "Religious Institutions, Church-State History and Muslim Mobilisation in Britain, France and Germany," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (August 2007) [on Reserves Direct]
- Nov 6. Politics in Russia: 1. CPT, pp. 335-351
- Nov. 8. Politics in Russia: 2. CPT, pp. 351-379
- Nov. 13. Russia 3. Read: Mikhail A. Alexseev, "Majority and Minority Xenophobia in Russia: the Importance of Being Titulars," *Post-Soviet Affairs* (2010) v 26, 2, pp. 89-120.
- Nov. 15. Politics in China 1. Read: CPT, pp. 381-400
- Nov. 20 China 2. Read: CPT, pp. 400-425
- Nov. 27. China: 3. Read: Peter W. Mackenzie. "Strangers in the City: The *Hukou* and Urban Citizenship in China," *Journal of International Affairs*, 56:1 (Fall 2002), pp. 305-319; Pun Ngai and Lu Huilin, "A Culture of Violence: The Labor Subcontracting System and Collective Action by Construction Workers in Post-Socialist China," *The China Journal*. no. 64, 2010. pp. 143-158. 2010. pp. 143-158.
- Nov. 29. Politics in Mexico: 1. Read: CPT, pp. 427-440
- Dec. 4. Politics in Mexico 2. Read: CPT, pp. 440-469
- Dec. 6. Mexico 3. Read: Gary L. Goodman and Jonathan T. Hiskey, "Exit without Leaving: Political Disengagement in High Migration Municipalities in Mexico," *Comparative Politics* 40:2 (January 2008), pp. 169-188.
- Dec. 11. Final exam review.

The paper assignment:

The paper is due December 11, 2012. It should be 5 pages in length. You are not asked to refer to any sources outside the readings assigned for the course. However, any information taken from the readings should be properly cited, as should any direct quotations. (Use endnote citation style, following the style used in the *Comparative Politics Today* textbook.) Your essay should be a well-written, well-organized analysis of the question, with your conclusions solidly based on factual evidence and logical reasoning. Choose one of the following 5 topics:

a. Constitutional engineering: Selecting two features of their present-day constitutions, show how the designers of the constitutions of France, Germany and Russia used constitutional arrangements to correct problems of the previous constitutions.

b. Electoral systems: Choosing any two countries that we have studied, compare their electoral laws. How do the electoral laws shape the party systems in the two countries? How do they affect interest aggregation?

c. Political parties: Choosing any two of the countries we are studying in this course, compare their political party systems. Do the party systems reflect similar or different ideological and social divisions?

d. Executive power: Choosing any two countries that we have studied, compare the organization of the executive branch. Compare how their chief executive are selected and how much power they have over policy making.

e. Comparing regimes: Compare Mexico, Russia, and China with respect to trends in the changes in their political regimes over the last decade. In what respects have their political processes and institutions grown more democratic or more authoritarian? What are the main reasons for these developments?