

## **Comparative Politics Spring 2009**

POL 10004-01  
Class Time: T,TH 215-330pm  
Classroom: BSA 215

Professor: Joshua Stacher  
Office: 302 Bowman (office 17)  
Office Hours: Tuesday 11-2pm  
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Teaching Assistant: Elena Pokalova  
Office: Bullpen (Bowman 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
Office Hours: Thursday: 12-2pm

### **Introduction:**

In political science, comparative politics is a subfield in the systematic study of politics. It is primarily concerned with the examination of the domestic politics of countries and people. It uses multiple theoretical tools to analyze countries so that comparative insights and knowledge can be uncovered. Some of the theoretical tools include evaluating an individual country's state formation, political economy, collective identity, cultures, institutional structures, and regime type. This includes examining the character of colonialism and imperialism as well as globalization. This enables students and researchers to comparatively think about different countries as well as investigate important questions that have been considered since humans started writing down their histories. Such questions include among others:

- 1) What is the "best" type of government?
- 2) How do poor countries develop?
- 3) What effect do social and economy structures have on politics?
- 4) Are democratic countries less likely to enter wars?
- 5) What is the role of "the people" in the process of development?

More recently, comparative politics has become interested in the relationship between authoritarianism and terrorism.

Comparative politics is interconnected with other social science disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and economics. It is also closely related to the humanities and draws on history, literature, and philosophy. Comparative politics can be as local or as global as you want to make it. Understanding the world in which we live is one of the most rewarding gifts that students and researchers can discover. Good comparativists understand other cultures, learn different languages, respect context, and develop the analytical skills to systematize and think about the world. It gives them an ability to take seemingly unrelated entities and come to a resolution about their differences. This skill serves students well in any number of fields in which they choose to work – some of which include journalism, government, civil society, or academia.

Central themes that we will address are:

- 1) Theoretical Concepts
- 2) Key Terminology used in Comparative Politics
- 3) Political Economy
- 4) Structures and Institutions including the Executive, Legislative, & Judicial Branches

- 5) The Differences Between Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies
  - 6) Democratic and Authoritarian Regimes
  - 7) Transitional States
  - 8) The Role of Culture
  - 9) Political Development
  - 10) Interest Articulation & Aggregation
  - 11) Policy Making Processes
  - 12) Private Institutions and Governance
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## Requirements

**Attendance:** The College of Arts and Sciences **requires** that its professors take attendance. During class meetings, the instructor will introduce the scheduled topic and indicate how it relates to the overall course objectives. The remainder of each class is more interactive and requires active and informed participation from the students. As such, it is imperative that students read the set texts closely to prepare for focused discussion.

Since a close reading of the material is a necessity, attendance is **mandatory**. Given that my presentations will complement and supplement the assigned reading, you will miss a great deal if you are absent. Only reading the text and/or relying on power point presentations will not be enough. Attendance is also mandatory for all exams & quizzes. Make-ups will only be given in emergency situations on a case-by-case basis.

**Quizzes:** There will be **THREE** quizzes in this course. They will range from short identify and define terminology essential to demonstrating an understanding of comparative political science to a world map quiz. The character of an individual quiz will be detailed with sufficient preparation time before the exercise. No make-up quizzes will be given so it is imperative that you are present for the quizzes on the scheduled days.

**Mid-Term Exam:** You will have an in-class mid-term examination, which will consist of multiple choice, True/false, and short answers, on **Thursday March 19**.

**Final Exam:** The cumulative final exam, which will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answers, and timed essays, is scheduled for **Tuesday May 12** between 12:45-3pm.

**Extra Credit:** Students that wish to improve their grade in their course can attend comparative politics/political science related campus activities (speakers, conferences, etc.) during the semester. To get credit, you must produce a 2-page response to the event. Each two-page response will be counted as 1-percent of the courses overall grade. You can only improve your grade by 5-percent overall throughout the semester.

## Evaluation & Assessment:

This course's assessment will be distributed accordingly:

- 1) Attendance: 10-percent
- 2) Quizzes: 30-percent (10% each)
- 3) Mid-Term Exam: 30-percent
- 4) Final Exam: 30-percent

**Required Texts:** (Available at KSU Student Center Bookstore, Dubois & Campus Supply)

Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, & William A. Joseph (General Editors), *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007). Also known as KKJ

Mark Kesselman & Joel Krieger (Editors), *Readings in Comparative Politics: Political Challenges and Changing Agendas* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006). Also known as KK

## Course & Reading Schedule

### What is Comparative Politics and How Can We Think About It?

Tu 1/20	Class 1: Watch the Presidential Inauguration	
Th 1/22	Class 2: Syllabus distribution and course introduction	
Tu 1/27	Class 3: What is Comparative Politics?	KKJ, pgs. 5-13
Th 1/29	Class 4: Themes of Comparative Analysis	KKJ, pgs. 13-21
Tu 2/3	Class 5: Classifying Political Systems	KKJ, pgs. 21-27
Th 2/5	Class 6: <b>Quiz #1:</b> Key Themes of Comparative Politics	

### Democracies

Tu 2/10	Class 7: The Importance of Democracy	KK, pgs. 102-111
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### The United States

Th 2/12	Class 8: Historical Context & Economy	KKJ, pgs. 301-325
Tu 2/17	Class 9: Governance & Participation	KKJ, pgs. 325-348

### Britain

Th 2/19	Class 10: Context	KKJ, pgs. 37-51
Tu 2/24	Class 11: Economy	KKJ, pgs. 51-60
Th 2/26	Class 12: Governance & Participation	KKJ, pgs. 61-80
Tu 3/3	Class 13: 1) Comparing Britain & the US 2) <b>Quiz #2:</b> US-British comparison	KKJ, pgs. 81-89 & 349-351

### Japan

Th 3/5	Class 14: Developmental State	KKJ, pgs. 201-214
Tu 3/10	Class 15: Economy	KKJ, pgs. 214-223
Th 3/12	Class 16: Governance & Participation	KKJ, pgs. 223-250
Tu 3/17:	Class 17: Exam Review	
Th 3/19	Class 18: <b>Mid-Term Examination</b>	

## SPRING BREAK 3/23-27

### Transitional Democracies & Authoritarianism

Tu 3/31            Class 19: Democracy & Authoritarianism            KK, pgs. 154-160

#### **Russia: Democracy after Authoritarianism?**

Th 4/2            Class 20: Making of Modern Russia            KKJ, pgs. 355-367

Tu 4/7            Class 21: Governance & Participation            KKJ, pgs. 380-402

Th 4/9            Class 22: Economy and Putin's Russia            KKJ, pgs. 368-380

Tu 4/14            Class 23: Post-Communist Lessons            KK, pgs. 190-199

Th 4/16            Class 24: Competitive Authoritarianism            KK, pgs. 60-69

#### **China: Economic Reform without Democracy**

Tu 4/21            Class 25: Making of the Chinese State            KKJ, pgs. 627-640

Th 4/23            Class 26: Economy            KKJ, pgs. 640-651

Tu 4/28            Class 27: Political Structures            KKJ, pgs. 651-680

Th 4/30            Class 28: **Quiz # 3:** The Map

#### **Just Authoritarian....**

Tu 5/5            Class 29: Egyptian Presidential Elections            Stacher article

Th 5/7            Class 30: Clash of Civilizations?            KKJ, pgs. 18-32

**Final Exam: Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 12:45-3pm**

**Good Luck this Semester!**