Political Science 186
Introduction to Comparative Politics – Honors
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fall 2015, Tuesdays 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
367 Van Hise

Yoshiko M. Herrera
Professor, Dept. of Political Science
University of Wisconsin-Madison
316 North Hall
yherrera@wisc.edu
https://faculty.polisci.wisc.edu/yherrera/
Office hours: Tues. 9:30-10:30 a.m. (or by appt.)

Course Description and Objectives

This course is an introduction to some of the key concepts and theoretical approaches in the comparative politics subfield of political science, and to the government and politics in select countries. Comparative politics is the study of processes and institutions within countries (whereas international relations is the study of interactions between countries). Prompted by real-world events and puzzles, comparativists investigate broad theoretical questions such as: How and why do countries democratize (or not)? What are different ways that states organize politics, i.e., how do they differ in terms of party systems, electoral rules, presidential powers, etc.? What is the relationship between the economy and the political system?

We will spend about half of the semester focusing on key concepts, and the final half studying those concepts in a sample of countries. The five countries that we will study in depth are the United Kingdom, Mexico, South Africa, Russia, and China. These represent many regions of the world and range from authoritarian regimes to newly democratic states and long-established democracies. The overall objective of the course is to give students grounding in the basic tools of comparative political analysis so that you can better understand world events and politics countries around the world.

This is an honors course and it will be based on student-centered discussion rather than lectures. Reading is essential for full participation in discussions and students will be asked to explain concepts from the readings in class. In addition, students will work in groups on in-class presentations that connect readings to current events. There will also be a final research paper and in-class presentation.

Essential Learning Outcomes:

This course will address several "essential learning outcomes" of the LEAP initiative (http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm). First, students' knowledge of human cultures will be enhanced by their exploration of politics, society, and the economy in other countries. Second, the course assignments are aimed at developing intellectual and practical skills, including analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and teamwork. Third, the connection between the political science material in the texts and current events, as well as the linkage of concepts and countries, is aimed at achieving an integrated learning experience.
Summary of Course Requirements and Grading
(see p. 5-7 for detailed descriptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading, preparation, and participation in class (1% each week x 13 weeks)</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly in-class quizzes (3% each week x 13 weeks)</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<td>Four individual memos and group presentations (5% each x 4)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper and individual presentation (25% paper, 3% presentation)</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Grades will be posted on Learn@UW each week. Failure in any of the four course components will result in failure in the course overall.

Other Course Policies

Disability Accommodations:

People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform me if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the McBurney Disability Office on campus. The McBurney Disability Resource Center can be reached at (608) 263-2741 or via email at mcburney@odos.wisc.edu.

Course Readings and Films

The following books are required and are referred to in the syllabus as either "Textbook" or "Casebook," as noted in brackets below.

- These two books can be purchased as a bundled pack at a substantial discount. The ISBN for the bundle (textbook + casebook) is: 978-0-393-27636-7.
- In addition electronic downloadable versions are also available. See the Norton website for package offers and electronic version options:
  - Note that these eBooks may still be Flash-based and hence might not work on the iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch, and some Android devices.
- The books are also available at the Reserve Section of the Helen C. White College library.
- For supplementary information on the books, see the Norton digital resources on the Learn@UW website, and the Norton site: add yourself to Student Set ID 12718: https://digital.wwnorton.com/esscompol5

In addition to these books,
- There are some assigned articles available on the Learn@UW course website
- Films will be available online, on campus, through Learning Support Services
- Current events articles will be posted by students on the Learn@UW website
Class Schedule and Readings

Tues., Sept. 8: Introduction to the Course

Tues., Sept. 15: What is Comparative Politics? and States
- Textbook: ch. 1, Introduction, 2-29 (5th ed.).
- Casebook: ch. 1, Introduction, 2-33 (5th ed.).
- Textbook: ch. 2, States, 30-61 (5th ed.).

Tues., Sept. 22: Nations and Society

Tues., Sept. 29: Political Economy
- Textbook: ch. 4, Political Economy, 98-135 (5th ed.).

Tues., Oct. 6: Democratic Regimes
- Textbook: ch. 5, Democratic Regimes, 136-173 (5th ed.).

Tues., Oct. 13: Nondemocratic Regimes
- Textbook: ch. 6, Nondemocratic Regimes, 174-205 (5th ed.).

Tues., Oct. 20: Political Violence
- Textbook: ch. 7, Political Violence, 206-237 (5th ed.).

Tues., Oct. 27: Developed Democracies, and Developing Countries
- Textbook: ch. 8, Developed Democracies, 238-269 (5th ed.).
- Textbook: ch. 10, Developing Countries, 308-341 (5th ed.).

Tues., Nov. 3: Communism and Postcommunism
- Textbook: ch. 9, Communism and Postcommunism, 270-307 (5th ed.).

Thurs., Nov. 5, 4:00 p.m.: Paper Proposals due, posted on Learn@UW as a .pdf
Tues., Nov. 10: United Kingdom:
  • Casebook, ch. 2, United Kingdom, 34-91 (5th ed.).
Film: Margaret Thatcher: Prime Minister

Tues., Nov. 17: Mexico
  • Casebook, ch. 11, Mexico 558-617 (5th ed.).
Film: Cause for Murder: Fighting Corruption in Mexico

Tues., Nov. 24: South Africa
  • Casebook, ch. 13, South Africa, 670-725 (5th ed.).
Film: Long Night's Journey into Day

Tues., Dec. 1: Russia
  • Casebook, ch. 7, Russia, 330-379 (5th ed.).
Film: My Perestroika

Tues., Dec. 8: China
  • Casebook, ch. 8, China, 380-443 (5th ed.).
Film: China from the Inside

Thursday, Dec. 10, 4:00 p.m.: Final Papers due, posted on Learn@UW as a .pdf

Tues., Dec. 15: Concluding Discussion and Student Presentations
  • Read student papers posted on Learn@UW.
Description of Course Requirements

Reading, Preparation, and Participation:
• All students are expected to do all of the readings for each class and to bring the readings to class in order to aid in discussion. For some weeks, there are films that students must watch prior to class. Students should also read the short current events articles posted prior to the presentations.
• This is a discussion-based class and active participation is essential. Mere attendance is not full participation. Active participation means being prepared by doing the reading and thinking about the material so that you can ask and answer questions related to the course material in class.
• I will call on a few students during each class meeting; you should be prepared to answer questions about each of the assigned readings.
• Students are expected to attend for the full class period; arriving late or leaving the room during class will result in a lowered participation grade for the day.
• It is fine to use a tablet or laptop in class to take notes, but doing other work unrelated to the course during class will result in a lowered participation grade for the day.
• Absences will only be excused due to religious conflicts or medical issues; contact me as soon as possible should a medical issue or religious conflict arise.

The grading scheme for discussion participation:
A = Attended and actively participated (e.g. raised hand frequently, and seemed in command of readings and material).
AB = Attended and infrequently spoke, but seemed in command of readings and material.
B = Attended and spoke, but without evidence of a high level of preparation.
C = Attended for the full period, but did not speak, or was engaged in non-course-related activities online.
F = Did not attend.
Note that there is no "D" reflecting the large gap between attending and not attending.

Weekly Quizzes
• Each week we will start the class with a short written quiz.
• Anything from the readings or films may be on the quizzes.
• The format of the quizzes will be 3-4 short-answer questions about key arguments of authors or definitions of major concepts from the readings.
• The best way to prepare for the quizzes is to do the readings and watch the films.

The grading scheme for quizzes:
A = Correctly answered all questions, showing excellent command of readings and material.
AB = Correctly answered all questions, demonstrating engagement with all of the readings, but with very brief answers and/or minor errors.
B = Correct answers on most questions, demonstrating engagement with at least some of the readings, but incorrect or missing answer on one question.
C = Incorrect or missing answers on more than one question.
F = Did not attend or take the quiz.
Individual Memos and Group Presentations:

Each week students will work in groups of 3 or 4 to prepare a 10-minute presentation, which should illustrate some concept(s) from the course readings by connecting the concept(s) to a current events article. There will be two presentations for each class meeting.

- As a basis for the presentation, each student will write and turn in an individual memo; the group will then meet and put together one collective presentation based on content selected from the individual memos.
  - Students will need to finish writing their individual memos a few days before class, in order to have time to meet in groups to develop a presentation. Group meetings can be set up in advance, however.
- A key goal of this assignment is learning to make connections. Your discussion of the readings, the current events article, and the discussion questions should be well-integrated in your individual memo and the group presentation.
  - For points from the readings, choose things that are relevant to the article, and for the discussion of the article try to connect material from the article with course readings. Similarly the discussion questions should connect the reading material and points raised in the article.

Choosing Current Events Articles:

- Choose an article relevant to the week’s reading. For example, for the week the readings are on democratic regimes, an appropriate current events article might focus on whether or not a particular country is democratic, or the lack of rights or liberties in a specific country, etc.
- Current events articles can be chosen from any reputable English language newspaper or magazine, e.g. New York Times, The Economist, The Guardian of London, The International Herald Tribune, The Wall St. Journal. Focus on established publications, i.e. print newspapers or magazines, not just any internet site. Also the articles should be articles, not just blog posts on newspaper websites.
- The current events article used in the presentation should be sent as a link or PDF to the class by Monday at noon. Use this address: polisci186-1-f15@lists.wisc.edu.
- The article should also be posted on Learn@UW under the "Communication" tab, under "Discussion." There will be a discussion topic for each week set up, so just respond to that discussion topic with your attached article.
- All students should read the current events article before class.

Individual Memos:

The memo should be one page and have three parts:

1. Course material outline: Read the assigned material and outline key points from the course readings. Describe 3-5 points that you think are good candidates for the presentation.
2. Article suggestion: Cite the title and newspaper, summarize the article in 1-2 sentences, and describe in 1-2 sentences how the article is connected to the week’s topic.
3. Discussion question suggestions: Write out 3 questions that you think are good candidates for the presentation.

Memos are due the day before class (Monday) at noon; should be posted as a PDF on Learn@UW.
The Slides and In-Class Presentation:

- There should be at least 4 slides (with a maximum of 5 slides); the slides should follow this order, with one slide addressing each of these bullet points:
  1. Title and names of all students in the group;
  2. Discussion points from the course readings;
  3. Discussion points from the newspaper article, including links to the course readings;
  4. 2-3 discussion questions that link the course readings and the article (note: these questions should also be orally posed to the class at some point during the presentation).
- Slides are due at least one hour before class (by 1:30 p.m.); they should be emailed to me (or a link emailed to me) and also posted on Learn@UW.
- Students are free to use PowerPoint, Pages, or other software for the presentation.

Grading Criteria for Individual Memo (individual grade 3%):

A = Meets AB criteria, but without errors. Overall memo shows excellent understanding of readings and article; the article is clearly related to the reading, and the course material, article and set of discussion questions were well integrated.

AB = Meets B criteria, and in addition made connections between readings, article, and discussion questions, but possibly with some errors in discussion of readings or article.

B = Discussed and captured the main arguments of readings, suggested an article that met criteria, and provided discussion questions, but article, readings and/or discussion questions were not clearly connected or related to each other.

C = Inaccurate or incomplete discussion of main points from readings, suggested article did not meet criteria for selection, or did not provide discussion questions.

F = Did not turn in memo.

Grading Criteria for Group Presentation (group grade 2%):

A = Meets AB criteria, and in addition presentation delivery was engaging (e.g. eye contact with audience, speaking rather than reading, and elicited participation by audience).

AB = Meets B criteria, and in addition the content of the presentation was coherent: the article was well integrated with the course reading and discussion questions.

Presentation delivery was adequate.

B = Presentation demonstrated good command of course material and understanding of the article, and all students in the group participated in the presentation.

C = Presentation included some discussion of course material, a current events article and discussion questions, but there were some errors.

F = Did not attend or participate in a presentation (can be given to specific individuals and can differ from the group grade).

- Presentations will be marked down one grade if the article is not sent out by noon the day before class (Monday), or if the presentation slides are not emailed to me and posted by 1:30 p.m. on class day.
- Presentations with a significant number of grammatical or spelling errors will be marked down one grade. Make sure to proofread.
Final Paper

This paper will connect the theoretical material from the first half of the course with the case studies. Students should choose one of the five case-study countries (Russia, Mexico, China, South Africa and the United Kingdom) and one of the theoretical topics covered in course readings and write a paper focusing on the chosen theoretical topic in the chosen country.

- The paper should advance an argument, which could be a causal claim (e.g. why something happened, such as why South Africa democratized) or can analyze a concept in light of empirical evidence (e.g. is South Africa a democracy according to established definitions of democracy?).
- The paper must use 3 sources that were found in the UW-Madison library system, at least one of which must be a book or other printed, non-electronic, source. Other sources for the paper can come from course readings and recommended readings. All sources must be academic sources, i.e. not merely an internet site, or other non-academic source. If you have a question about a source, please ask.
- I encourage you to meet with me early in the term to discuss your final paper.
- Be sure to cite all sources fully and properly.
- Students should also explore resources at the Writing Center (http://writing.wisc.edu).

- The paper assignment will be divided into two parts: Part 1 and the final paper. For all parts of the paper, include:
  - Your name on every document you turn in, in the text and in the electronic file title (e.g. "SmithPart1.pdf," not "part1.pdf")
  - Use 12-point font, 1-inch margins
  - All parts of paper should be posted as a PDF on Learn@UW

Due dates for parts of the research paper and requirements:
- Thursday, Nov. 5, 4:00 p.m., Part 1 due, posted to Learn@UW. This part should be approximately one single-spaced page, and consist of the following sections:
  1. Paper Title: This should describe what is in the paper
  2. Research question: Something along the lines of "What caused X to occur?" or "How does concept X apply to this place?" (For example, what led to democratization in South Africa? Why were there protests in Russia in 2012? Is China still a communist country? Is Mexico a democracy?)
  3. Paragraph describing the theoretical concept from the course that applies to your research question; this should be clearly related to one of the concepts in the first part of the course (e.g. elections, states, political economy, democracy, ethnic conflict, communism, etc.)
  4. Paragraph describing your case; this should explain the place, time, or other contextual details of the place/region/time period you are analyzing. This should include one or more of the five countries in the second part of the course. (Something about Russia, Mexico, China, South Africa and the United Kingdom, including the time period and region of the country if applicable.)
  5. List of key sources to be used from course material, including at least 3 sources from the
UW-Madison library system.
- One sentence following each source to explain why it is useful for the paper.
- At least one source must be a printed source not available electronically.

- **Thursday, Dec. 10, 4:00 p.m.** full research paper due, posted to Learn@UW.
  - Approximately 10 double-spaced pages, excluding citations
  - Be sure to include your name, date, a title, page numbers

- **Tuesday, Dec. 15, in-class**, Paper presentations and discussion of papers
  - Papers will be arranged into panels of 3-4 papers.
  - All students will give a 5-minute presentation based on their papers.
  - No slides necessary.

**Extra Credit:**
There are two options for extra credit:

1. You can receive extra credit by turning in a 1-page response papers to films for the country case studies. The papers must be turned by the day we discuss the country in class.

2. Occasionally I forward announcements of campus events related to the course (and if you see an event that is relevant that I have not forwarded, please let me know and I will pass it along). If you attend any of the events that I forward announcements on, you can get extra credit by submitting within 1 week a response paper of no longer than 1-page, which should discuss your reaction to the material presented (i.e. did you find it interesting, did you agree, disagree, etc).

The extra credit will be worth 1/2 percent of the final grade point total; Each student can get a maximum of 6 extra credits (3% total of your grade).
Additional Recommended Readings

**States**

**Nations and Society**

**Political Economy**

**Democratic Regimes**

**Nondemocratic Regimes**

**Political Violence**

**Developed Democracies**

**Developing Countries**

**Communism and Postcommunism**
United Kingdom:
• Recommended Film: Projekt Scotland, http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pcmbr

Mexico

South Africa

Russia
• Mankoff, Jeffrey. 2014. "Russia’s Latest Land Grab: How Putin Won Crimea and Lost Ukraine," Foreign Affairs 93:3, 60-68

China

• Huang, Yasheng. 2013. "Democratize or Die: Why China’s Communists Face Reform or Revolution," Foreign Affairs 92:1, 47-54.