Political Science 186: Politics Around the World - Honors
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fall 2016, Tuesdays 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., Ingraham 223

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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 of 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 the first half of the semester focusing on key concepts, and the final half studying those concepts in relation to 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 equip students with the basic tools of comparative political analysis in order to help them 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, each week students will write about the readings during in-class quizzes. Finally, students will work in groups on a series of assignments culminating in an original final research paper and presentation.

Essential Learning Outcomes:
This course will address several "essential learning outcomes" of the LEAP initiative (http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm). Students' knowledge of human cultures will be enhanced by their exploration of politics, society, and the economy in other countries. The course assignments are aimed at developing intellectual and practical skills, including analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and teamwork. The goal of connecting the political science material in the texts to the country studies is achieving an integrated learning experience. Finally, the group work on paper proposals and final paper will help students to gain competence in communication skills and teamwork.

Summary of Course Requirements and Grading (see details on pp. 5-7)

I. Reading, preparation, and participation in class
   (4% x 4 grades throughout semester): 16%
II. In-class quizzes (3% each week x 13 weeks) 39%
III. Group Final Paper (4 paper proposals (1%+3%+5%+6%), final paper 25%) 40%
IV. Group Final presentation (preliminary slides 1%, presentation 4%) 5%

100%
## Summary of Class Schedule

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep-6</td>
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<td>Introduction: What is Comparative Politics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sep-13</td>
<td>States</td>
<td>Individual Country Proposal, due noon on Sept. 12th</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sep-20</td>
<td>Nations and Society and Political Violence</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Political Economy</td>
<td>Group Proposal 1: Concepts and Country, due noon on Sept. 26th</td>
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<td>Oct-4</td>
<td>Democratic Regimes</td>
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<td>Oct-11</td>
<td>Non-Democratic Regimes</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct-18</td>
<td>Developed Democracies and Developing Countries</td>
<td>Group Proposal 2: Causal Research Question, due noon on Oct. 17th</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct-25</td>
<td>Communism and Post-Communism</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nov-1</td>
<td>Russia</td>
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<td>Nov-8</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov-15</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Group Proposal 3: Data, Evidence, and Sources, due noon on Nov. 14th</td>
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<td>Nov-22</td>
<td>No class – Thanksgiving week</td>
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<td>Nov-29</td>
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<td>Dec-6</td>
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<td>Dec-15</td>
<td>Final Paper due, noon</td>
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### Course Readings and Films

Required books, referred to in the syllabus as either "Textbook" or "Casebook,":

- Can be purchased as a bundled pack at a substantial discount. Bundle ISBN: 978-0-393-27636-7
- 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](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
Class Schedule and Readings

**Tues., Sept. 6: What is Comparative Politics?**
- Textbook: ch. 1, Introduction, 2-29 (5th ed.).
- Casebook: ch. 1, Introduction, 2-33 (5th ed.).

**Sept-12 Individual Country Proposal due at noon**

**Tues., Sept. 13: States**
- Textbook: ch. 2, States, 30-61 (5th ed.).

**Tues., Sept. 20: Nations and Society and Political Violence**
- Textbook: ch. 7, Political Violence, 206-237 (5th ed.).

**Sept-26 Group Proposal 1: Concepts and Country due at noon**

**Tues., Sept. 27: Political Economy**
- Textbook: ch. 4, Political Economy, 98-135 (5th ed.).

**Tues., Oct. 4: Democratic Regimes**
- Textbook: ch. 5, Democratic Regimes, 136-173 (5th ed.).

**Tues., Oct. 11: Nondemocratic Regimes**
- Textbook: ch. 6, Nondemocratic Regimes, 174-205 (5th ed.).

**Oct-17 Group Proposal 2: Causal Research Question due at noon**

**Tues., Oct. 18: Developed Democracies and Developing Countries**
- Textbook: ch. 8, Developed Democracies, 238-269 (5th ed.).
- Textbook: ch. 10, Developing Countries, 308-341 (5th ed.).

**Tues., Oct. 25: Communism and Postcommunism**
- Textbook: ch. 9, Communism and Postcommunism, 270-307 (5th ed.).
**Tues., Nov. 1: Russia**
- Casebook, ch. 7, Russia, 330-379 (5th ed.).
- Film: *My Perestroika*

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

Nov-14 Group Proposal 3: Data, Evidence, and Sources due at noon

**Tues., Nov. 15: Mexico**
- Casebook, ch. 11, Mexico 558-617 (5th ed.).
- Film: *Cause for Murder: Fighting Corruption in Mexico*

**Tues., Nov. 29: South Africa**
- Casebook, ch. 13, South Africa, 670-725 (5th ed.).
- Film: *Long Night's Journey into Day*

Dec-5 Presentation Slides due at noon

**Tues., Dec. 6: United Kingdom:**
- Casebook, ch. 2, United Kingdom, 34-91 (5th ed.).
- Article on Scotland, TBD
- Article on Brexit, TBD
- Film: *Margaret Thatcher: Prime Minister*

**Tues., Dec. 13: Student Paper Presentations**

Dec-15 Final Papers due at noon
Description of Course Requirements

I. Reading, Preparation, and Participation:

• 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. All students are expected to do all readings for each class and to bring the readings to class in order to aid in discussion.

• 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.

• It is fine to use a tablet or laptop in class to take notes, but doing other work or online activity unrelated to the course during class will result in a lowered participation grade.

• Participation grades will be given 4 times during the semester, taking into account the previous 3-4 weeks of participation. The grading scheme for reading and discussion participation is:
  A = Attended and actively participated, seemed in command of readings and material; able to explain concepts to the class.
  B = Attended and spoke, demonstrating adequate engagement with the readings, but infrequently or without full understanding of the course material.
  C = Attended but did not speak, did not show evidence of having done the readings, was engaged in non-course-related activities online, arrived late, or left during class.
  F = Did not attend.
  Note that there is no “D,” reflecting the large gap between attending and not attending.

II. In-Class Quizzes

• Each week we will start the class with a short written quiz. Bring a piece of paper and pen to class.

• Anything from the readings or films may be on the quizzes.

• The format of the quizzes will be 2-3 short-answer questions about the authors’ key arguments 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.
**Group Work:**
In the following assignments (paper proposals, final paper, and final presentation), students will work in groups of approximately four or five. However, for each assignment, each student will also turn in a separate individual description of their own contribution, described below. Individual contributions will be taken into account and all students in each group will not necessarily receive the same grade.

**III. Group Final Paper and Proposals**
The goal of this assignment is an original research paper that connects the theoretical material from the first half of the course with the case studies from the second half of the course, and provides a casual explanation. Students will work on the paper through a series of structured proposals:

1. Individual Country Proposal, due on 9/12, noon
2. Group Proposal 1: Concepts and Country, due 9/26, noon
3. Group Proposal 2: Causal Research Question, due 10/17, noon
4. Group Proposal 3: Data, Evidence, and Sources, due 11/14, noon

For the paper and all proposals, 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.
- In a separate document, each group member should turn in a one-half page description of their own individual contribution and evaluation of others’ contributions to each part of final paper (5 total).

1. **Individual Country Proposal**
   Students should rank the five case-study countries (Russia, Mexico, China, South Africa and the United Kingdom) in order of preference and write a 1/2 to 1-page statement about why they would like to work on their first and second choices. By 9/13 students will be assigned country groups.

2. **Group Proposal 1: Concepts and Country**
   Students should choose one or two of the theoretical topics covered in course readings (e.g. elections, states, political economy, democracy, ethnic conflict, etc.) and specify the place, time period, or other contextual details of the country you are analyzing (e.g. Russia in 2012, coastal regions of China in the 1980s, Mexico after 2000), and write a one-page proposal linking the chosen theoretical topic to the assigned country. Include a tentative title.

3. **Group Proposal 2: Causal Research Question**
   Students should develop a causal research question (e.g. what explains why something happened, or what caused X to occur?) related to their chosen theoretical topic and country (e.g. why did South Africa democratize in the 1990s, why did China embark on what look like capitalist reforms, why did the USSR collapse, why did the Scottish referendum of 2014 fail, why did the PRI return to power in Mexico) and write a two-page proposal, with a title, explaining the question, why it is interesting, and considering some possible answers (i.e., hypotheses).
4. Group Proposal 3: Data, Evidence, and Sources
Students should develop a list of 20 sources found in the UW-Madison library system, at least 4 of which must be books or other printed, non-electronic, sources. All sources must be academic sources, i.e., not merely an internet site, or other non-academic source. The proposal must include one sentence following each source explaining why it is useful for the paper. Be sure to cite all sources fully and properly (see Learn@UW site for resources on citation).

5. The final paper is due on **December 15th at noon**.
   - The final paper should be approximately 20 double-spaced pages, excluding citations
   - Be sure to include a title page with your names, date, a title, and page numbers
   - Sections should be labeled and include:
     1. Introduction, stating the research question and a brief summary of findings (2 pp.)
     2. Existing theories/explanations (2 pp.)
     3. Your proposed theory/explanation (2 pp.)
     4. Evidence for different theories (12 pp.)
     5. Conclusion (2 pp)

IV. Final Paper Presentations:
This is an opportunity for you to share your work from the semester with your fellow students.
   - Preliminary slides are due on Dec. 5th, noon.
   - Presentations will be in class on December 13th.
   - Presentation should consist of 5-10 slides including:
     1. Title slide
     2. Description of the topic and research question
     3. Existing explanation and your theory
     4. Evidence for different theories
     5. Conclusions
   You may add to this and include images or other relevant visual design elements.
   - In a separate document, each group member should turn in a one-half page description of their own individual contribution and evaluation of others' contributions to the final paper presentation.
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.

Absence, Make-up and Final Grade Policy
1. Absences will be excused due to religious conflicts, medical issues, or university-related business. Contact me as soon as possible if you anticipate missing class.
2. Make-up policy for excused absences: Missed quizzes can be made up by writing a response paper on the readings. The response paper should be two single-spaced pages and discuss the central arguments of the readings as well as provide your own commentary on these arguments. The make-up assignment is due one week after the missed class.
3. Policy for missing more than 3 classes: If make-up assignments are completed, missing more than 3 classes will result in a one-half reduction of the final grade. If they are not completed, it will be a full grade reduction of the final grade. In addition, assignments that are not made up will receive an F.
4. Failure in any of the four required course components on the first page will result in failure in the course overall.

Extra Credit:
There are two options for extra credit:
1. You can receive extra credit by turning in a 1-page response paper to films for the country case studies. The papers must be turned in on 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 a response paper of no longer than 1-page within 1 week of the event, 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% of your final grade).