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 politics in select countries. Comparative politics is the study of politics 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 in comparative politics, and the final half studying those concepts in a sample of countries. The seven countries that we will study in depth are the United Kingdom, India, Mexico, South Africa, Iran, China, and Russia. 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 in 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 write each week on the readings during in-class quizzes and in discussion questions. Finally, students will work on a series of assignments related to 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, and written and oral communication. The connection between the political science material in the texts and country studies is aimed at achieving an integrated learning experience.

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

I. Discussion Questions and Class Participation 20%
II. In-class Quizzes (each week x 13) 50%
III. Final Paper (including 3 paper proposals) 25%
IV. Final Paper presentation 5%

100%
Summary of Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments*</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept-3</td>
<td>Introduction: What is Comparative Politics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept-13</td>
<td>States</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept-20</td>
<td>Nations and Society, and Political Violence</td>
<td>Proposal 1: Concepts and country, Mon. 9/25, 10 am</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept-27</td>
<td>Political Economy</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Oct-4</td>
<td>Democratic Regimes</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct-11</td>
<td>Non-Democratic Regimes and Communism</td>
<td>Proposal 2: Causal research question, Mon. 10/16, 10 am</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct-18</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct-25</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Nov-1</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov-8</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Proposal 3: Annotated bibliography, Mon. 11/13, 10 am</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov-22</td>
<td>No class – Thanksgiving week</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov-29</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Dec-6</td>
<td>Russia</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Dec-13</td>
<td>Student Paper Presentations</td>
<td>Slides: Wed. 12/13 at 10 am</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dec-18</td>
<td>Final Paper due, 7:25 pm</td>
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* For each course meeting between Sept-13 and Dec-6, discussion questions are due at 10:00 am

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

In addition to these books, there are many assigned articles.
- Students should download them via the library site (this is part of library skill development).
- A small number of articles or chapters not available via the library; these are marked on the syllabus and they will be on the course website.

Films will be available online, on campus, through Learning Support Services.
Class Schedule and Readings

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

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

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

**Monday Sept. 25: Proposal 1: concepts + country due at 10:00 am**

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

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

**Wed., Oct. 11: NonDemocratic Regimes and Communism**
- Textbook: ch. 6, Nondemocratic Regimes, 174-205 (5th ed.).
- Textbook: ch. 9, Communism and Postcommunism, 270-307 (5th ed.).
Monday Oct. 16: Proposal 2: causal research question and hypotheses due at 10:00 am

**Wed., Oct. 18: United Kingdom:**
- Casebook, ch. 2, United Kingdom, 34-91 (5th ed.).
- Film: TBA

**Wed., Oct. 25: India**
- Casebook, ch. 9, India, pp. 444-501 (5th ed.).
- Film: TBA

**Wed., Nov. 1: Mexico**
- Casebook, ch. 11, Mexico 558-617 (5th ed.).
- Film: TBA

**Wed., Nov. 8: South Africa**
- Casebook, ch. 13, South Africa, 670-725 (5th ed.).
- Film: Long Night’s Journey into Day

Monday Nov. 13: Proposal 3: annotated bibliography due at 10:00 am
**Wed., Nov. 15: Iran**

- Casebook, ch. 10, Iran, 502-557 (5th ed.).
- Film: TBA

**Nov. 22, No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Wed., Nov. 29: China**

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

**Wed., Dec. 6: Russia**

- Casebook, ch. 7, Russia, 330-379 (5th ed.).
- Film: *My Perestroika*

**Wednesday Dec. 13: Presentation slides due at 10:00 am**

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

**Monday Dec. 18: Final Papers due at 7:25 pm**
Description of Course Requirements

I. Discussion Questions and Class 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. Students should bring the readings to class in order to aid in discussion.
- I may 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 activity unrelated to the course during class will result in a lowered participation grade.

Discussion questions:

- Each week students should post 2 questions for discussion to the course website, by 10:00 am on Wednesday.
- Questions must be related to the course readings.
- One question should be a broad question for discussion; something that would be of interest to the class and that connects to more than one of the readings.
- The second question should be a more narrow question focused on one reading.

Participation grades will be given 3 times during the semester, taking into account the previous few weeks of participation. The grading rubric for discussion questions and participation is:

- A Attended and actively participated, seemed in command of readings and material; able to explain concepts to the class. Discussion questions were well-connected to the content of the readings.
- B Attended and spoke, demonstrating adequate engagement with the readings, but infrequently or without full understanding of the course material. Discussion questions were turned in on time.
- 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. Discussion questions were late or not turned in.
- 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 3-5 short-answer questions focused on definitions of major concepts from the readings or films, and 1-2 longer-answer questions that discuss a key argument from the readings.
- The best way to prepare for the quizzes is to do the readings and watch the films, and take notes on the main arguments of each article.
The grading rubric for quizzes:
- A: Correctly answered all questions, demonstrating 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.

III. Final Paper

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, and provides a casual explanation. Students will work on the paper through a series of structured proposals. Requirements of the paper and all proposals:
- On every document you turn in, include your name, the date, the class name, and a title for the assignment. Also, include your name 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 the course website.

1. Proposal 1: Concepts and country (1 page), due 9/25, 10:00 am
   Students should choose one or two of the theoretical topics covered in course readings (e.g. elections, states, political economy, democracy, nationalism, etc.) and specify the place, time period, or other contextual details of the country you are analyzing (e.g. Russia in the 2000s, China since 1980s, Mexico after 2012), and write a one-page proposal linking the chosen theoretical topic to the assigned country. Explain why you are interested in this topic and country. Be sure to include a descriptive title; this will be the preliminary final paper title.

2. Proposal 2: Causal research question and hypotheses (2 pages), due 10/16, 10:00 am
   Students should develop a causal research question (e.g. what explains why something happened, or what caused something to occur?) related to their chosen theoretical topic and country, e.g. why did South Africa democratize in the 1990s; why has inequality in China grown so much; why did the USSR collapse; why did the Scottish referendum of 2014 fail; why did the PRI return to power in Mexico; why did the BJP win elections? The two-page proposal should explicitly include a question, a discussion of why the question is interesting, and what some possible answers (hypotheses) from the course readings might be. If possible include hypotheses from other readings. Hypotheses should be numbered.

3. Proposal 3: Annotated bibliography (2 pages, plus attach the revised proposal 2), due 11/13, 10:00 am.
   Students should develop a list of 10 sources found in the UW-Madison library system and 3 sources from the course readings. All sources must be academic sources, i.e. not merely an internet site, or other non-academic source. The bibliography must include full citations and 2-3 sentences following each source to explain why it is useful for the paper.
4. The final paper is due on December 18th at 7:25 pm (start of course final exam period)
   • The final paper should be approximately 15 double-spaced pages, excluding citations.
   • Be sure to include a title page with your name, date, a title, and page numbers.
   • Sections should be labeled with sub-headings; suggested divisions are below:
     1. Introduction, stating the research question and a brief summary of findings (1 p.)
     2. Existing theories or explanations (2 pp.)
     3. Your proposed theory or explanation (1 pp.)
     4. Evidence for different theories (10 pp.)
     5. Conclusion (1 pp).

Grading criteria for final papers:
   A Clear and well-motivated research question, good discussion of existing literature; innovative argument; good use of evidence to support argument; robust and accurate connection to the course readings; proper citation of sources; no typos or errors; within the word limit; includes title and sub-headings.
   B Clear research question, satisfactory discussion of existing literature; clear argument; some use of evidence to support argument; satisfactory connection to the course readings; proper citation of sources; few typos or errors; within the word limit; includes title and sub-headings.
   C One or more of the following problems: research question unclear, unsatisfactory discussion of existing literature; unclear argument; lack of evidence to support argument; unsatisfactory connection to the course readings; improper citation of sources; typos or errors; paper goes beyond the word limit; lacks title or sub-headings.

Note on lateness: if a paper is between 5 minutes and 4 hours late, the paper will be marked down one grade. If it is between 4 and 24 hours late, it will be marked down 2 grades. If it is not turned in 24 hours after the deadline, it will not be accepted.

IV. Final Paper Presentations:
This is an opportunity for you to share your work from the semester with your fellow students, and to develop presentation skills.
   • Presentations will be in class on December 13th; slides are due by 10:00 am on the 13th.
   • Presentations should consist of 5 slides:
     1. Title slide
     2. Research question and motivation
     3. Existing explanations and your theory/argument
     4. Evidence for your argument
     5. Conclusions
   • Slides should use consistent style.
   • You may add images or other relevant visual design elements.

Grading criteria for final presentations:
   A Contains 5 slides as noted above; text is adequate to convey points, but is not too wordy; style is consistent; visual images are relevant and helpful in conveying points; no typos or style errors; speaker addresses audience, speaks clearly, and makes eye contact, keeps audience engaged.
B Contains 5 slides as noted above; too much text in some slides; some inconsistency in style; minimal or no images; some typos or style errors; speaker does not consistently address audience, speak clearly, make eye contact, or keep audience engaged.

C One or more of the following problems: too many or too few slides; too much text in some slides; inconsistency in style; many typos or style errors; speaker does not addresses audience, speak clearly, make eye contact, or keep audience engaged.

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 readings in terms of the central arguments as well as provide some commentary from you on these arguments.
   • Missed discussion can be made up by writing a response paper that addresses student discussion questions (in addition to the quiz make-up assignment). The response paper should be two single-spaced pages and discuss the readings in response to discussion questions.
   • Both make up response papers are due at 10:00 am, one week after the missed class (unless the excused absence period is extended). If response papers are not submitted on time, they will not be accepted.
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, un-made-up assignments 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.