

## Comparative Politics Political Science 265:01 Fall 2007

*M, W, F*

*1:00 – 1:50*

*AB1 Room 302*

*Office Hours: M 2-3*

*T 5-6*

*W 5-6*

*or by appointment*

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### Course description

This course is a survey of important issues and trends in world political systems. American politics is placed in a comparative context in a course that includes the terminology, methods and concepts of comparative politics. The basic assumption in this course is that to understand any political system or phenomenon, we have to look at it not by itself but in a context of other systems or phenomena. For instance, the best way to understand how legislators are elected is to examine multiple countries' ways of electing theirs.

**Prerequisite: POL 261**

### Course objectives and goals

The three goals of this course are informative, skill-building and critical-theoretical. These may be understood as follows:

#### informative

On this most basic level, the course aims to provide factual information about various countries and their political systems. The purpose here is to expose class participants to knowledge about new places and to allow / prepare for more informed world citizenship.

#### skill-building

Thus course will call for using and developing research skills. Participants will not only have to receive information presented to them but also engage in finding things out for themselves. In this sense, the course will be useful beyond its own limits since these skills will be useful in other intellectual pursuits as well.

#### critical-theoretical

Acquiring new information and enhancing research skills will contribute to the growth of class participants as critical thinkers. The ultimate goal of the semester is to enable participants to ask (and answer) questions about why and how it makes sense to compare

certain political systems. In addition to being informed,, participants will also have the opportunity to become reflective members of their larger community.

### Course text

Comparative politics: Domestic responses to global challenges – Charles Hauss. Fifth edition. Wadsworth. ISBN: 0-534-56754-1.

### Assignments

#### In-class essay exams

Closed-book, essay-types exams in blue books. Questions will ask for comparisons of certain aspects of the countries discussed in the section since the last exam. Exams are non-cumulative. There will be a choice of questions.

#### Research times

Individual online work on the final exam project. Each student will have to come up with a comparative topic that they will write their final exam on. The topic will have to cover some aspect(s) of two countries discussed in the course. If the United States is one of the countries included, there must be a total of three countries covered. Research times are three consecutive class meetings held in a computer lab during which students can look for information on their topic of choice. It is understood that research for the final exam need not be limited to these research times.

#### Final exam

The final exam consists of writing up your individual research. You will be able to bring in whatever printouts you have from your research, articles you found, notes you took. This is an open-book, open-note exam. If you wish, you may bring your textbook with you to the exam, although you have to be aware that you will be penalized for repeating what the book says or comparisons that the book makes.

It is essential that you begin working towards your final exam early on. Find a topic that is of interest to you. If you are uncertain whether the topic is acceptable, describe your research during a ‘meeting 4’ (see below under extra credit) or use office hours to discuss it. Please note that at the time of the final exam, you will have to come in with your research notes and a blue book, and write individually.

### Grading plan

There will be a total of 200 points you can earn in this class. They will be distributed as follows among the different parts of the course:

40 attendance checks	40 points	20 %
exam 1	20 points	10 %
exam 2	40 points	20 %

exam 3	50 points	25 %
final	50 points	25 %

Throughout the course of the semester, your grades will be numbers, not letters. If you want to convert your number grade to a letter grade, use the standard grading scale that will also yield your final grade in the class. For instance, if an assignment is worth 40 points and you got 32 points, that is 80 % and therefore a low B-level performance.

Grades will be assigned on the standard grading scale:

A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and below.

### Extra credit

The fourth and last meeting time devoted to each country discussed, 'meeting 4', will be different in structure from the other class meetings. These meetings will be devoted to more conversational discussions about the country discussed during the previous three meetings, to interesting cultural or trivia items about the country on the agenda, as well as discussing interesting questions or quandaries about that country. You will have the opportunity to sign up to present or discuss possible research ideas (as preparation for the final exam) during these 'meeting 4' occasions, according to the following:

- ✧ a maximum of 3 people may present at any given 'meeting 4'
- ✧ you have to sign up at least one week in advance to present
- ✧ you may do a maximum of 2 presentations during the course of the semester
- ✧ you may receive a maximum of 5 points for a 'meeting 4' presentation (earning a maximum of 2.5% of your final course grade at a presentation)
- ✧ 'meeting 4' presentations are in no way mandatory or required

### Course policies

The policies that govern this course are included on the BlackBoard site of the course, under Course Documents. Please note that you are responsible for knowing and abiding by, the contents of the 'Course Policies' document and that everything in it has the same force as other items on the syllabus. Please familiarize yourself with the document early on.

*Tentative course schedule*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>check?</b>
Aug 20	M	Introduction		
Aug 22	W	Comparative method	Haus 1	att 1
Aug 24	F	UK 1	Haus 4	att 2
Aug 27	M	UK 2	Haus 4	att 3
Aug 29	W	UK 3	Haus 4	att 4
Aug 31	F	UK 4		att 5
Sept 5	W	France 1	Haus 5	att 6
Sept 7	F	France 2	Haus 5	att 7
Sept 10	M	France 3	Haus 5	att 8
Sept 12	W	France 4		att 9
Sept 14	F	Germany 1	Haus 6	att 10
Sept 17	M	Germany 2	Haus 6	att 11
Sept 19	W	Germany 3	Haus 6	att 12
Sept 21	F	Germany 4		att 13
Sept 24	M	EXAM 1		
Sept 26	W	US 1	Haus 8	att 14
Sept 28	F	US 2	Haus 8	att 15
Oct 1	M	US 3	Haus 8	att 16
Oct 3	W	US 4		att 17
Oct 5	F	Russia 1	Haus 9	att 18
Oct 8	M	Russia 2	Haus 9	att 19
Oct 10	W	Russia 3	Haus 9	att 20
Oct 12	F	Russia 4		att 21
Oct 15	M	China 1	Haus 10	att 22
Oct 17	W	China 2	Haus 10	att 23
Oct 19	F	China 3	Haus 10	att 24
Oct 22	M	China 4		att 25
Oct 24	W	EXAM 2		
Oct 26	F	India 1	Haus 12	att 26
Oct 29	M	India 2	Haus 12	att 27
Oct 31	W	India 3	Haus 12	att 28
Nov 2	F	India 4		att 29
Nov 5	M	research		att 30
Nov 7	W	research		att 31
Nov 9	F	research		att 32
Nov 12	M	Mexico 1	Haus 16	att 33
Nov 14	W	Mexico 2	Haus 16	att 34
Nov 16	F	Mexico 3	Haus 16	att 35
Nov 19	M	Mexico 4		att 36
Nov 26	M	Iran 1	Haus 13	att 37
Nov 28	W	Iran 2	Haus 13	att 38
Nov 30	F	Iran 3	Haus 13	att 39
Dec 3	M	Iran 4		att 40
Dec 5	W	EXAM 3		

final to be scheduled by SHSU