

POL 265H: Comparative Survey of World Political Systems (Honors)

Fall 2007

3 credit hours

Tu,Th 2:00-3:20 p.m. AB1 306

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Office Hours: T, Th 5:00-5:30 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

What is democracy? Are France and Sweden more or less democratic than the U.S.? Why are some countries politically and economically developed whereas others (many Third World countries) so poor and ruled by dictatorial governments? Why do we have a strong two party system in the U.S. whereas most democratic countries have a multi-party system? What is a parliamentary system? What is a unitary system? Why is the U.S. Supreme Court one of the most political and most powerful high courts in the world? Why did communism collapse in the former USSR and Eastern Europe? These are some of the questions that we should be able to answer by the end of the semester.

Political Science is not only fun, exciting and controversial but is essential to an understanding of everyday life. This course will discuss: (1) various concepts in Comparative Politics; and (2) major governing systems such as Western industrialized democracies, former-communist regimes and recent transitions to unstable democracies, and third world dictatorial regimes. Throughout the course we will distinguish between description, analysis, and normative judgment.

Most students will find that the materials covered in this course are not especially difficult to understand. There is a substantial amount of materials to be read, however, and it is imperative for each student's success that he or she develops a regular study schedule that permits keeping up with the assignment at all times.

You are expected to watch national and international news such as CNN at least five times a week. I highly recommend PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer. If you do not have access to television, you should read *The New York Times* or the daily news from the Internet sites <http://www.cnn.com> or <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. It is imperative that you attend all the lectures. If you are going to miss a class, ask a friend to tape the lecture for you. Rolls will be taken periodically. Anyone with 3 absences (that are not excused) will receive an "F." Permission to take a make-up exam will rarely be given and only a dire situation will warrant one. Make-up exams will be harder than the one given to the entire class.

Religious Holy Day or Days

A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day or days or to travel for the purpose of religious observance may take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time. The student should inform me before or immediately after the absence in writing (e-mail preferred). The student will have 15 days to complete the assignment or take the exam. If you are to miss the lecture, have a fellow student tape the lecture for you. Absence due to religious holy day does not count towards the 5 absences.

Academic Dishonesty

Anyone caught cheating will receive "F" for the course and will be referred to the Associate Vice President for Student Services for further disciplinary action.

Attention Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals that otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs, nor shall they be subject to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with me so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Thought Papers: You have to hand in 4 thought papers (about 2 to 4 paragraphs each). Each of the thought papers deals with issue or issues discussed in the lecture or the assigned readings. I will give you the question one session before the due date. You HAVE to bring the thought paper with you to the class. Each student will read aloud in class his or her thought paper.

Course Grade Will be Computed as Follows:

Map Quiz	20%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
4 Thought Papers	40%
Final Exam	20%

Textbook:

Patrick H. O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 2nd edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

outline

weeks 1-3 **Introduction**
pp. xv-xxiii.

week 4 **Map Quiz, Mid-Term Exam**

week 5 **What is Comparative Politics?**
ch. 1; thought paper #1

week 6 **Nature of the State**
ch. 2

week 7 **Nation and Society**
ch. 3; thought paper #2

week 8 **Political Economy**
ch. 4; thought paper #3

week 9 **Authoritarianism**
ch. 5

week 10 **Democracy**
ch. 6; thought paper #4

week 11 **Advanced Democracies**
ch. 7

week 12 **Communism and Post-Communist Systems**
ch. 8

week 13 **Third World**
ch. 9

week 14 **Globalization**
ch. 10

weeks 15 **Political Violence (Revolution, Terrorism)**
ch. 11

Thursday December 13, 2007, 3:00 p.m. **Final Exam**