

POLS 150: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
FALL SEMESTER 2009
MW 10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m., 1005 Haworth Hall
Discussion sections, various times and locations

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Office Hours: MW 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why are some countries democratic and other countries autocratic? Why do some countries seem more stable than others? How do institutions and laws differ among democratic states and does this variation affect political competition? The study of comparative politics addresses these questions and many others. We will study democracy and autocracy, political culture, and institutions across the globe. The class will consist of lectures and discussion. You will be evaluated on the basis of exams, quizzes, attendance, participation, and a research project.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1) Barrington, Lowell. 2010. *Comparative Politics: Structures and Choices*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

You may also purchase an electronic version of the textbook at:

<https://www.ichapters.com/tl1/en/US/storefront/ichapters?cmd=catProductDetail&showAddButton=true&ISBN=978-0-618-49319-7>

2) Material posted on the class website.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You will be held responsible for all material in the textbook and in class. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the information that we covered. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including reading newspapers, talking during lectures, and insulting classmates or the instructor. **You must turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones and notebook computers, during class. Your grade will be reduced for interruptions caused by these devices.**

- **The research paper must be submitted in hard copy and electronically. I will submit all papers to a plagiarism detection tool.** Failure to submit an electronic copy will result in a grade of "incomplete" for the course.
- If you would like to challenge any grade that you have received, you must submit a typed explanation to your G.T.A. indicating why the grade should be reconsidered before you meet to discuss a grade change.
- Any student in this course who has a disability that may preclude demonstrating fully his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible. We will discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation in the course.

- You should plan on completing the course and all of its requirements during the term. Requests for grades of incomplete or withdrawal will be granted only to students with serious extenuating circumstances that they can document.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following components:

1. Exams (50%)
2. Quizzes (15%)
3. Research Project (20%)
4. Attendance & Participation (15%)

Exams

You will take three exams during the semester. Your top two scores will be counted toward the final grade; you will drop your lowest exam score. Because of this, **there will be no make-ups for exams**. If you miss an exam for any reason, it will be considered your lowest score. During the exam period, I will pass out exams until the first exam has been completed. **Do not be late to exams** – if you arrive after the first exam has been returned, you will receive a score of 0.

Quizzes

You will have weekly quizzes on the assigned reading that you will access via the Blackboard site. Due dates for quizzes are listed on the syllabus. You may drop your lowest quiz grade. **There will be no make-ups for quizzes**.

Research Project

Many university faculty members do not permit students to cite Wikipedia in research papers due to concerns over accuracy. A 2005 study by the journal *Nature* found an average of four errors in Wikipedia science entries compared to three in *Encyclopedia Britannica* entries (you may read the report online at the journal *Nature* (Vol. 438, Dec. 15, 2005) through KU's online subscription). The research project challenges you to assess the accuracy of a Wikipedia entry while familiarizing yourself with a wide range of research resources available at KU. During the semester, you will fact-check an entry on politics, selecting a country from a list that I will provide. You must check the major assertions of fact by confirming them with at least two sources each. You may not fact-check using:

1. Work cited in the Wikipedia entry;
2. Other entries on Wikipedia;
3. Internet sites whose sources are not verifiable (news sites such as the *New York Times* are acceptable; independent blog entries are not).

You will compose a short paper (3-4 pages) reporting the results of your investigation, as well as a detailed list of sources that you have consulted. The research paper is due at the beginning of class on December 9, 2009 and constitutes 20% of your grade.

Attendance

Attendance and active participation in discussion sections accounts for 15% of your grade. Your GTA will discuss his/her expectations at the first meeting of the section. In addition to assessing the quality of your participation, your GTA will also take attendance at every meeting of your discussion section beginning the week of August 31, 2009. You may miss two classes for any reason (this includes illness, weather, fatigue, and all reasons foreseeable and unforeseeable). Each absence beyond two

reduces your final grade by three points (to a maximum of 15 points). For example, if your final grade was a B- (80), but you missed three discussion sections, your amended final grade would be a C+ (77). **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

In addition, one point will be added to your final score for each absence you do not use. For example, if your final grade was a C+ (78), but you attended each discussion section during the entire semester, your amended final grade would be a B- (80).

GRADING SCALE

100-94 = A; 93-90 = A-; 89-87 = B+; 86-84 = B; 83-80 = B-; 79-77 = C+; 76-74 = C; 73-70 = C-; 69-67 = D+; 66-64 = D; 63-60 = D-; 59 – 00 = F

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. If you cheat, plagiarize, or commit any other violation of academic integrity (including signing the attendance sheet for absent students), you will be assigned an F for the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

While I give specific days on which certain topics will be covered, the calendar is subject to change:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Assignment:</u>
Week 1 Mon., 8/24 Wed., 8/26	Topics: Introduction to the Course & Power in Politics Readings: Barrington, Chapter 1 (first half).
Week 2 Mon., 8/31 Wed., 9/2	Topics: Analytical Techniques & Nations, States, and Regimes Readings: Barrington, Chapter 1 (second half), Chapter 2. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 1, due at midnight on Monday, 8/31.
Week 3 Mon., 9/7 Wed., 9/9	No Class on 9/7 – Labor Day Topics: Development & Globalization Readings: Barrington, Chapter 3. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 3, due at midnight on Wednesday, 9/9.
Week 4 Mon., 9/14 Wed., 9/16	Topics: Political Culture & Ideology Readings: Barrington, Chapter 4. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 4, due at midnight on Monday, 9/14.
Week 5 Mon., 9/21 Wed., 9/23	Topics: Identity & Divisions Readings: Barrington, Chapter 5. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 5, due at midnight on Monday, 9/21.
Week 6 Mon., 9/28 Wed., 9/30	Topics: Regime Types & <u>Exam 1 (9/30)</u> Readings: Barrington, Chapter 6 (first half). Exam #1 on 9/30
Week 7 Mon., 10/5 Wed., 10/7	Topics: Political Institutions Readings: Barrington, Chapter 6 (second half) and Chapter 7 (legislatures). Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 6, due at midnight on Monday, 10/5.

Week 8 Mon., 10/12 Wed., 10/14	<u>No Discussion Sections (Fall Break)</u> Topics: Political Institutions Readings: Barrington, Chapter 7 (executives) and Chapter 8 (judiciary). Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 7, due at midnight on Monday, 10/12.
Week 9 Mon., 10/19 Wed., 10/21	Topics: Political Institutions & Public Opinion Readings: Barrington, Chapter 8 (bureaucracy and military). Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 8, due at midnight on Wednesday, 10/21.
Week 10 Mon., 10/26 Wed., 10/28	Topics: Participation & Interest Groups Readings: Barrington, Chapter 9. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 9, due at midnight on Monday, 10/26.
Week 11 Mon., 11/2 Wed., 11/4	Topics: <u>Exam 2 (11/2)</u> & Research Project Readings: No Assigned Readings. Exam #2 on 11/2
Week 12 Mon., 11/9 Wed., 11/11	Topics: Political Parties & Elections Readings: Barrington, Chapter 10. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 10, due at midnight on Monday, 11/9.
Week 13 Mon., 11/16 Wed., 11/18	Topics: Leadership & Decision-making Readings: Barrington, Chapter 11. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 11, due at midnight on Monday, 11/16.
Week 14 Mon., 11/23	<u>No Discussion Sections (Thanksgiving Break)</u> <u>No Class on 11/25 – Thanksgiving Break</u> Topics: Open Discussion Readings: No Assigned Reading.
Week 15 Mon., 11/30 Wed., 12/2	Topics: Democratization Readings: Barrington, Chapter 12. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 12, due at midnight on Wednesday, 12/2.
Week 16 Mon., 12/7 Wed., 12/9	<u>Research Project Due at the Beginning of Class on 12/9</u> Topics: Policy-making & Conclusion Readings: Barrington, Chapter 13. Assignment: Online Quiz, Chapter 13, due at midnight on Monday, 12/7.
Mon., 12/14	Exam #3, 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.