

POLS 151: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
FALL SEMESTER 2008

TR 2:30-3:45 P.M., 107 SMITH HALL

PROFESSOR ERIK HERRON
OFFICE: 310 BLAKE HALL
OFFICE HOURS: TR 9:30-10:30 a.m. and by
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Course website available through Blackboard

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

The study of comparative politics addresses how political, economic, and social features differ across the globe and why these differences matter. Through lectures, discussion, and classroom activities, we will address:

- How democratic and authoritarian governments manage domestic politics;
- How institutions vary across the globe and why this variation matters;
- How political culture affects the way citizens interact with each other and their governments;
- How economics and geography affect politics.

I will evaluate student performance through exams, quizzes, a research project, and class participation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- 1) Georg Sørensen. 2007. *Democracy and Democratization*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- 2) A coursepack, available at the Department of Political Science, 504 Blake Hall.
- 3) You may download the following articles at no additional cost through the KU library website.
 - a) Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy." *Comparative Politics*. 29(4):449-471.
 - b) Ronald Watts. 1998. "Federalism, Federal Political Systems, and Federations." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 1:117-137.
 - c) Donald Horowitz. 2003. "Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers." *Journal of Democracy*. 14(4):115-127.
 - d) Dmitri Landa and Ethan B. Kapstein. 2001. "Inequality, Growth, and Democracy." *World Politics*. 53(1):264-296.
 - e) Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik. "Contentious Politics in New Democracies: East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, 1989-93." *World Politics*. 50(4):547-581.
 - f) Mark Lichbach. 1995. "The 5% Rule." *Rationality and Society*. 7:126.
 - g) Samuel Huntington. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*. 72(3):22-49.
 - h) M. Steven Fish. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics*. 55:4-37.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You will be held responsible for all reading and classroom material. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the content of that day's class (you must obtain notes from another student; my notes will not be made available for student use). I will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including reading newspapers, text messaging, talking during lectures, and insulting classmates or the instructor. **You must turn off all cell phones during class.**

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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following components:

- 1) Exams (50%)
- 2) Research Project (25%)
- 3) Quizzes (10%)
- 4) Attendance and Participation (15%)

Exam: You will take two exams during the term. Each exam constitutes 25% of your grade.

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:

- Work cited in the Wikipedia entry;
- Other entries on Wikipedia;
- 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 (4-5 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 11, 2008 and constitutes 25% of your grade.

Quizzes: I will post an online multiple-choice quiz once per week. To receive credit, you must respond to the quiz by midnight on the day before the reading is due (the first day it is listed on the syllabus). Your performance on quizzes constitutes 10% of your grade.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and active participation in discussion accounts for 15% of your grade. I will take attendance at each class session beginning on September 2, 2008. For each class period beyond four that you miss, you will lose two points on your attendance and participation score.

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

If you cheat, plagiarize or commit any other violation of academic integrity, you will be assigned an F for the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date:	Assignment:
Week 1 Thurs., Aug. 21	The Study of Comparative Politics <i>Discussion Questions:</i> What is political science? What is comparative politics? What are the major research questions in comparative politics?
Week 2 Tues., Aug. 26 Thurs., Aug. 28	No Class Sessions – Professor Herron Attending a Conference <i>Reading:</i> Sorensen (2007). Chapters 1-2. <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Sorensen) due by midnight on Mon., Sept. 1
Week 3 Tues., Sept. 2 Thurs., Sept. 4	Democracy and Democratization <i>Reading:</i> Carothers (2002). "The End of the Transition Paradigm." <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Carothers) due by midnight on Mon., Sept. 1 <i>Discussion Questions:</i> How do definitions of democracy differ? How do political scientists measure democratic quality?
Week 4 Tues., Sept. 9 Thurs., Sept. 11	Comparative Politics Research <i>Reading:</i> Collier (1993). "The Comparative Method." CP Freedom House methodology, located at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/printer_friendly.cfm?page=35&year=2006 <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Collier) due by midnight on Mon., Sept. 8. <i>Questions:</i> What are the advantages/disadvantages of case studies, the comparative method, and the statistical method? How does Freedom House assess democracy (or freedom)? What are the shortcomings of Freedom House's methodology?
Week 5 Tues., Sept. 16 Thurs., Sept. 18	Authoritarian Regimes <i>Reading:</i> Sorensen (2007). Chapter 3. Levitsky and Way. (2002). "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Sorensen) due by midnight on Mon., Sept. 15. <i>Discussion Questions:</i> How do authoritarian regimes function? How do authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes differ in process and outcomes?
Week 6 Tues., Sept. 23 Thurs., Sept. 25	Exporting Democracy <i>Reading:</i> Sorensen (2007). Chapter 4. <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Sorensen) due by midnight on Mon., Sept. 22. <i>Discussion Questions:</i> How do democracies emerge and succeed? How can external actors accelerate democratization?
Week 7 Tues., Sept. 30 Thurs., Oct. 2	Rational Choice and Comparative Politics <i>Reading:</i> Shepsle and Bonchek (1996). Chapters 1-3. CP Riker (1986). Chapters 2 and 4. CP <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Shepsle and Bonchek) due by midnight on Mon., Sept. 29.

	<i>Discussion Questions:</i> What is "instrumentally rational" behavior? How do people make decisions under the assumptions of instrumental rationality? How can we resolve the paradoxes revealed by rational choice approaches to politics?
Week 8 Tues., Oct 7 Thurs., Oct 9	No Class Sessions – Professor Herron in Azerbaijan Exam Prep
Week 9 Tues. Oct. 14 Thurs., Oct. 16	No Class Sessions – Professor Herron in Azerbaijan/Fall Break Midterm Exam (Tuesday)
Week 10 Tues., Oct. 21 Thurs., Oct. 23	Report: Azerbaijan's Presidential Election Political Institutions - Introduction <i>Reading:</i> Lijphart (1999). Chapters 2-3. CP <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Lijphart) due by midnight on Wed, Oct. 22 <i>Discussion Questions:</i> What are political institutions and why are they important? How do majoritarian and consensus systems differ?
Week 11 Tues., Oct. 28 Thurs., Oct. 30	Presidential, Semi-Presidential, and Parliamentary Systems Centralization and Decentralization <i>Reading:</i> Mainwaring and Shugart (1997). "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy." Watts (1998). "Federalism, Federal Political Systems, and Federations." <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Mainwaring and Shugart) due by midnight on Mon, Oct. 27. <i>Discussion Questions:</i> What are the advantages/disadvantages of various executive systems? Does decentralization/federalism mitigate or exacerbate conflict?
Week 12 Tues., Nov. 4 Thurs., Nov. 6	Election Rules and Their Effects <i>Reading:</i> Horowitz (2003). "Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision-Makers." Reynolds and Reilly (2005). Chapters 2-3. CP <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Horowitz) due by midnight on Mon, Nov. 3. <i>Discussion Questions:</i> How are legislators and presidents elected to office? How do differences in election rules affect outcomes? What might be the effects of changing election rules?
Week 13 Tues., Nov. 11 Thurs., Nov. 13	Politics and the Economy <i>Reading:</i> Sorensen (2007). Chapter 5. Landa and Kapstein (2001). "Inequality, Growth and Democracy." <i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Sorensen) due by midnight on Mon, Nov. 10. <i>Discussion Questions:</i> What are the main features of market, centrally planned and mixed economic systems? Does government policy help or impede economic growth and/or social welfare?
	Contentious Politics <i>Reading:</i> Sorensen (2007). Chapter 6.

	<p>Ekiert and Kubik (1998). "Contentious Politics in New Democracies: East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, 1989-93." Lichbach (1995). "The 5% Rule."</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Ekiert and Kubik) due by midnight on Wed, Nov. 12.</p> <p><i>Discussion Questions:</i> What motivates citizens to protest? Why are large protests so uncommon?</p>
<p>Week 14 Tues., Nov. 18 Thurs., Nov. 20</p> <p>Week 15 Tues., Nov. 25</p>	<p>Culture and Politics <i>Reading:</i> Huntington (1993). "The Clash of Civilizations." Inglehart (2001). "Culture and Democracy." CP Fish (2002). "Islam and Authoritarian."</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Quiz (Huntington) due by midnight on Mon, Nov. 17. Quiz (Fish) due by midnight on Mon., Nov. 24.</p> <p><i>Discussion Questions:</i> What is political culture? What is "democratic" political culture? How does culture affect politics? What attitudes and beliefs must be accommodated in democratic societies? Are some ideas inappropriate for public discourse? How are religious traditions incorporated into political culture and institutions? What is the meaning of separation of religion and the state?</p>
Thurs., Nov. 27	No Class – Thanksgiving Break
<p>Week 16 Tues., Dec. 2 Thurs., Dec. 4</p>	<p>Constitutional Design Exercise <i>Assignment:</i> Prepare for and participate in a constitutional design simulation. Further instructions will be posted on Blackboard.</p>
<p>Week 17 Tues., Dec. 9</p>	<p>Constitutional Design Debriefing <i>Discussion Questions:</i> What was the optimal constitutional design for each negotiating group? What role did international actors play in guiding political actors to conflict resolution? What role did history and culture play in the negotiations? Do you think that the final constitution will be durable? Why or why not?</p>
Thurs., Dec. 11	Final Exam Review Research Paper Due
<p>Finals Week Thurs., Dec. 18</p>	Final Exam, 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.