

INTS 200: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Spring 2008

T/TH 2:00 – 3:15 PM, 110 Buckman

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Office hours: Wed. 11 - noon; 2:30 - 4 pm

Fri. 3 - 4:30 pm (or by appointment)

This course provides an introduction to the study of domestic politics and governments around the world. We will discuss the core concepts and themes of comparative politics and pose a number of questions: What explains the emergence of democracy in some nations (and not others)? How do different types of political regimes affect the lives of ordinary people? Why do political institutions vary across countries, and how do these differences shape outcomes? Why does ethnic diversity sometimes lead to violent conflict? We will shed light on these and other questions by examining diverse country cases, including Chile, China, Iran, Russia, Rwanda, and the United Kingdom, among others. You also will have the opportunity to do independent research on a country of particular interest to you.

Upon completion of this course, you should have a deeper understanding of politics, especially the ways in which political decisions and policies affect people's lives as well as how people mobilize to influence those decisions and policies. In addition, participation in this class should improve your ability to think critically, analytically, and comparatively about politics, to consider current events from a more historical and theoretical perspective, and to formulate arguments and support them with evidence.

Requirements

You are responsible for material covered in class and in the readings. Please note that much of the material covered in class is *not* included in the readings (and vice versa).

Your final grade is based on the following components:

Two exams	35%	2/14, 4/3
Country monitoring reports	20%	Due 2/1, 3/13
Essay	10%	Due 4/24
Two film response papers	15%	Due dates vary
In-class exercises	10%	Dates vary
Participation	10%	

- *Exams*: These consist of short answer questions, to be completed during class, and a take-home essay question, to be completed outside of class and turned in the following day. Exam 2 will emphasize material covered since Exam 1. There is no comprehensive exam scheduled during finals week.
- *Country monitoring*: You will select a country that interests you and become an expert on current and recent political events there by consulting outside sources. You will turn in two brief reports

analyzing different aspects of your chosen country. More detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided in class.

- *Essay*: In lieu of a third exam, you will write an analytic essay of approximately 4 pages covering the third portion of the course. Topics will be distributed in class.
- *Film response papers*: Three feature-length films are on reserve at Barret Library's Media Center. You will select *two* of the three films and write short analytic papers relating their content to issues discussed in class. Specific instructions and due dates for each paper are available in my public folder.
- *In-class exercises*: These unannounced exercises usually consist of brief questions on readings. They are designed to encourage active, engaged reading before each class. At the end of the semester, your lowest score is dropped. No make-ups will be scheduled for missed exercises.
- *Participation*: The format of this course is a combination of short lectures and discussions. You are expected to attend class regularly, complete the assigned readings for that session, and participate vigorously in discussions and activities. This grade is determined by 1) your attendance record (see policy below), and 2) your in-class contributions.

The grading scale for the course is as follows: A (100-93); A- (92-90); B+ (89-88); B (87-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-78); C (77-73); C- (72-70); D (69-60); F (59 and below).

Class policies

- **Honor Code**: It is expected that the College's Honor Code will govern the work that you do in this course, as well as your conduct in class. Pertinent information is available at: <http://www.rhodes.edu/campuslife/1478.asp>.
- **Absences**: Students with **four** or more *unexcused* absences automatically receive a failing participation grade. *Excused* absences entail providing documentation of a personal or family emergency (e.g., illness) or prior commitment (e.g., jury duty) and are subject to the instructor's approval. Personal travel is not a valid reason for missing class; make your plans accordingly.
- **Tardiness**: Arriving late to class more than 1-2 times signals to me that this is a low-priority course for you. As a result, your participation grade will be lowered by one whole letter grade.
- I will not accept assignments submitted via email. I mark late work down one-third of a letter grade per day (for instance, an A becomes an A-, then a B+, etc.) until I receive a hard copy.
- If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at x3994 as soon as possible.

Tips for succeeding in this course

- Attending class, keeping up with the readings, and critically engaging the course materials (both during and outside of class) are all crucial to your success. The more effort you devote to this course, the more valuable the experience will be!
- I encourage you to visit me during office hours to discuss issues raised in class, assignments, study skills, etc.

Readings

Two *required* texts are available at the Rhodes Bookstore:

O'Neil and Rogowski. 2006. *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*. 2nd ed. W.W. Norton & Co.
O'Neil, Fields and Share. 2006. *Cases in Comparative Politics*. 2nd ed. W.W. Norton & Co.

Additional required readings, marked with an asterisk (*) below, are on reserve in Barret Library and available in my public folder, where they are saved under the author's last name (unless noted otherwise).

I also urge you to read the *New York Times*, *Economist*, and/or other sources of international news on a regular basis so that we can incorporate current events into our class discussions.

Course schedule

TH, 1/10: Greetings & introduction to the course

T, 1/15: Introduction to the field of comparative politics

What sorts of topics do comparativists research? How (and why) do they compare political systems?

- *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 1.
- *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, p. 61-68: Rotberg, "The New Nature of Nation-State Failure."

Part One: Political Regimes and Regime Change

During this section of the course, we compare different types of regimes and discuss their evolution over time. Emphasis is placed on non-democratic regimes.

TH, 1/17: Defining democracy and other regime types

- *Essential Readings*, p. 247-255: Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy Is. ... and Is Not"
- Leaflet circulated by the KKK. Available online at:
<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/price&bowers/Klan.html>

Reminder: Don't forget to watch the film *The Lives of Others* (the paper assignment is in my public folder). The paper is due in my office on Friday, 1/25 by 4 PM.

T, 1/22: Communism

Case study: Soviet Union

- *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 6.
- *Brooks. *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!* (2000), p. 54-82; 126-149.

TH, 1/24: Back in the USSR

- *Applebaum. *Gulag* (2000), p. 92-109; 217-241.

T, 1/29: Communism, Take Two

Case study: *China*

- *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 7.
- *Recommended*: *Hartmann. "China: 'Gold Babies' and Disappearing Girls." In *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs* (1995), p. 157-170.

TH, 1/31: China: Economic reform without political reform?

- *Chen. "The New Inequality." *Journal of Democracy* (2003), p. 51-59.
- *Essential Readings*, p. 381-399: Pye, "Traumatized Political Cultures;" Buruma, "What Beijing Can Learn from Moscow."

Country reports (first installment) due in my office on Friday, 2/1 by 4 PM

T, 2/5: Authoritarianism

Case study: *Chile*

- *Weiss Fagen. "Repression and State Security." In *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, ed. Corradi, Weiss Fagen and Garretón (1992), p. 39-68.
- *Constable and Valenzuela. *Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet* (1991), Chs. 4 & 6 (p. 90-107, 140-165).

TH, 2/7: Authoritarianism continued: Organizing under military rule

- *Fruhling. "Resistance to Fear in Chile." In *Fear at the Edge...*, p. 121-141.
- *Recommended*: *News articles saved in public folder under "Pinochet"

Reminder: Don't forget to watch the film *Machuca* (the paper assignment is in my public folder). The paper is due in my office on Monday, 2/25 by 4 PM.

T, 2/12: Wrap up non-democracies

Review for Exam 1

- No reading assignment (time to catch up!).

TH, 2/14: Exam 1

Take-home essay is due in my office on Fri., 2/15 at 4 PM.

Part Two: Democracy and Democratization

In Part Two, we discuss the most recent “wave” of democratization that has occurred in various regions. We then analyze the inner workings of democracies, noting the sheer diversity of their institutions and examining the consequences of this variation.

T, 2/19: Democratization: Assessing the ‘Third Wave’

- *Linz and Stepan. “Toward Consolidated Democracies.” *Journal of Democracy* (1996), p. 14-33.

TH, 2/21: Democratic transitions: The transitional justice debate

- *Matear. “Coming to Terms with the Past: Chile.” *History Today* (2004), p. 27-29.
- *Applebaum. *Gulag* (2000), p. 564-577 (Epilogue).
- *See also the short handout saved as “policy options” in my public folder. *Recommended:* Essay on truth commissions available at: http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/truth_commissions

T, 2/26: Democratization: Comparing Eastern Europe and South America

- *Bunce. “Comparing East and West.” *Journal of Democracy* (1995), p. 87-100.

TH, 2/28: *No Class*

3/4-6: *No Class* (Spring Break)

T, 3/11: The challenges of democratic consolidation and deepening

- *Morje Howard. “The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society.” *Journal of Democracy* (2002), p. 157-169.
- *Dudley. “Deadly Force: Security and Insecurity in Rio.” *NACLA* (Nov/Dec 1998), p. 31-36.

TH, 3/13: The debate over democracy in the Muslim World: A democratic “deficit”?

- *Inglehart and Norris. “The True Clash of Civilizations.” *Foreign Policy* (Mar/Apr 2003).
- *Recommended:* Skim *Essential Readings*, p. 214-226: Fish, “Islam and Authoritarianism.”

Country reports (second installment) due at beginning of class

T, 3/18: The Muslim World continued: Spotlight on Iran

- *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 9.

TH, 3/20: *Easter Recess (no class)*

T, 3/25: Democratic institutions: Parliamentary and presidential systems
Case studies: United Kingdom and United States

- *Mainwaring and Shugart. “Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal.” *Comparative Politics* (1997), p. 449-471.
- *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 2.

TH, 3/27: Democratic institutions: Why do they matter?

- *News articles saved in public folder under “US”
- *Recommended: Essential Readings*, p. 155-165, 257-266: Alesina et al., “Why Doesn’t the US Have a European-Style Welfare State?”

T, 4/1: Review for Exam 2

- No reading assignment

TH, 4/3: Exam 2

Take-home essay is due in my office on Fri., 4/4 at 4 PM.

Part Three: The Politics of Ethnic Identity

In this final section of the course, we examine the political implications of ethnic, racial, religious, and other social cleavages, with a focus on how politicized ethnic identities sometimes produce violent conflict.

T, 4/8: Social cleavages and conflict

- *Valentino. *Final Solutions* (2004), Ch. 5 (skip section on Armenia).

Reminder: Don’t forget to watch the film *Sometimes in April* (the paper assignment is in my public folder). The paper is due on Tuesday, 4/15 in class.

TH, 4/10: Ethnic conflict
Case study: Rwanda

- *Gourevitch. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (1998), Chs. 1, 7 & 11.

T, 4/15: Ethnic conflict continued

- *Gourevitch. *We Wish to Inform You ...*, Ch. 16.

T, 4/17: Sectarian violence in Iraq

- *Articles saved in public folder under “Iraq” (Note: you are only required to read to p. 12 of the Chatham House Briefing Paper).

Essay topics distributed

T, 4/22: Last class meeting

TH, 4/24: Essay due in my office by 4 PM.

Note: The above schedule is subject to modification if the instructor deems it necessary.