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INTS 200-01, Introduction to Comparative Politics, Spring 2011

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RHODES COLLEGE
Department of International Studies
INTS 200: Introduction to Comparative Politics - 21337
Spring 2011
MWF 12:00—12:50, Buckman 214

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Office Hours:
Wed 10:00-11:00
Fri 1:00 -2:00
By Appointment

“Thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And, in the absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research.” — Guy Swanson

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Comparative politics is both a sub-field of political science and a method of political study whose focus is comparing and contrasting different political systems. It seeks to enhance our understanding of politics by comparing the political systems, political institutions, and political processes of different countries around the world. In doing so, comparative politics seeks to address questions as to how different societies organize themselves politically; why some societies are democratic and others non-democratic; why many go through peaceful social change as others experience violent social revolutions; whether there is a link between type of regime and economic performance; as well as the consequences of type of regime for policy outcomes and citizen participation in politics. In seeking to address these issues among others, this course is premised on the concept of democracy. We will assume that democracy is a continuum and is predicated upon the manner in which political institutions and processes are structured in a given polity.

Following a methodological introduction and an examination of institutional approaches, we will proceed to examine the different ways in which political institutions are structured around the world and their implications for governance, participation, and political outcomes. We will then focus on country-case studies divided into three sets on a democratic continuum. First we will focus on established democracies, including Britain and India; and then non-democracies including Iran and China, and finally transitional democracies including Mexico and South Africa. It is expected that at the end of the course, students would have: (a) gained skills for comparative political analysis; (b) enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the different ways in which politics is conducted around the world; and (c) grasped the consequences and implications for these differences.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Kopstein & Lichbach, 2009. *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Daniele Caramani, 2008. *Comparative Politics*. London: Oxford University Press.
3. Fiona Yap, ed. 2010. *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 10/11*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
4. Other readings will be assigned from time to time as indicated in the course outline below.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Class attendance is mandatory and any unexcused absence will be penalized. Students are expected to come to class early and sign the attendance sheet. It is the responsibility of those with valid reasons for being absent to provide documented proof so that changes can be made on their attendance record.
2. Students are required to switch off beepers, pagers, and cell phones while class is in session.
3. Students are expected to read the assigned material for each class meeting before coming to class so as to be active participants in class discussions. In addition to the textbooks, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with current issues in international politics as reported both by the print and electronic media, particularly focusing on reports and articles about themes/issues/countries/regions related to those covered in the course.
4. In addition to two midterm exams and a final exam, students are required to write two analytical papers of between 7 and 10 double-spaced pages on countries of their choice. The country chosen must be outside of North America and not included in this syllabus as one of the case studies to be discussed in class. Details about the papers will be provided in class. Country choices are due the third week of class.
5. All country analytical papers are to be presented in class with each student allocated five minutes. They must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date in hard copy, typed double space using a 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman. Under no circumstances will electronic submission of assignments be allowed.
6. Make-up exams will only be given for documented medical or official reasons such as participation in scheduled away sports games, call-up for military duty, etc. No make-up exams will be given for early vacation plans, over-sleeping, etc. Other than in the case of emergencies such as hospitalization, accident, and severe illness, for documented, official reasons, permission must be received in advance of the exam.
7. To do well in this course, you need to read the assigned materials carefully and critically; attend class regularly; participate in class discussions; complete assignments on time; and take advantage of my office hours to consult with me on class issues you do not understand.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

❖ Participation	10%	Class attendance and active participation
❖ Midterm I	20%	February 4
❖ Country Paper I	15%	February 28
❖ Midterm II	20%	March 30
❖ Country Paper II	15%	April 15
❖ Final exam	20%	May 3, 1:00 PM

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

94-100: A; 90-93: A-; 87-89: B+; 84-86: B; 80-83: B-; 77-79: C+; 74-76: C; 70-73: C-; 60-69: D; 0-59: F

THE HONOR CODE

An essential feature of scholarship is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. Accordingly, it is expected that students will abide by the college's honor code in all their scholarly activities and conduct.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

I. Institutional Approaches

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Jan 12	Introduction: What is Comparative Politics?	K&L pp. 1-37; DC Chap 1
Jan 14	Methods and Significance of Comparative Political Analysis	DC Chaps 2, 3
Jan 17	MLK Day Holiday	None
Jan 19	Economic Development and the Essentials of Democracy	DC Chap 5; AE 1-4, 32
Jan 21	The Social Contract: Constitutions	DC Chap 9; AE 8, 21, 26
Jan 24	Federal vs. Unitary Political Systems	DC Chaps 8, 11
Jan 26	<i>Video Show: The Challenge of Diversity</i>	None
Jan 28	Political Parties and Interest Groups	DC Chaps 12, 14; AE 9, 10, 12
Jan 31	The Politics of Social Movements	DC Chap 16; AE 31
Feb 2	The Politics of Violence and Revolution	AE 7, 11, 15, 24, 33, 40
Feb 4	Midterm Exam 1	Revise Notes & Readings

II. The Politics of Established Democracies

	U.K: Roots of Parliamentary Democracy	
Feb 7	Modern State Formation	K&L pp. 41-68
Feb 9	Governance and Policymaking	K&L pp. 68-85
Feb 11	Political Economy and Development	K&L, 41-46, 66-80, 135-138
Feb 14	Current Politics and Topical Issues	AE 14; TBA
	India: World's Most Populous Democracy	
Feb 16	Modern State Formation	K&L pp. 367-388
Feb 18	Governance and Policy making	K&L pp. 383-402
Feb 21	Political Economy and Development	K&L pp. 388-417
Feb 23	Current Trends and Topical Issues	AE 34; TBA
Feb 25	Paper I Presentation	Prepare Presentation
Feb 28	Paper I Presentation	Prepare Presentation

III. The Politics of Non-Democracies

Date	Iran: The Politics of a Theocracy	Reading
Mar 2	Modern State Formation	K&L pp. 419-441

Mar 4	Governance and Policymaking	K&L pp. 429-458
Mar 7	Political Economy and Development	K&L pp. 429-440
Mar 9	The Role of Political Islam	TBA
Mar 11	Current Trends and Topical Issues <i>Video Clips: IRGC Brief History; Nuclear Negotiations; Iran Responds to Obama</i>	AE 17, 23
Mar 14	Spring Recess	None
Mar 16	Spring Recess	None
Mar 18	Spring Recess	None
	China: Politics of the Middle Kingdom	
Mar 21	Modern State Formation	K&L pp. 271-287
Mar 23	Governance and Policymaking	K&L pp. 287-315
Mar 25	Political Economy and Development <i>Video Clip: The Great Leap Forward – Man-made Famine</i>	AE 33; TBA
Mar 28	Current Trends and Topical Issues <i>Video Clip: Tiananmen Square Massacre; Uighur-Han Ethnic Violence in Xinjiang – June 2009; Violence in Tibet – 2008</i>	AE 19, 37
Mar 30	Midterm II	Revise Notes and Readings
Apr 1	Easter Recess	None

III. The Politics of Transitional Democracies

Date	Mexico: From Caudillos to Zapatistas	Readings
Apr 4	Modern State Formation	K&L pp. 319-336
Apr 6	Governance and Policymaking	K&L pp. 336-364
Apr 8	Political Economy and Development	K&L pp. 337-348
Apr 11	Current Trends and Topical Issues <i>Video Clip: Drug Cartels – US-Mexico Border; Mexico’s Drug Wars</i>	AE 18; TBA
Apr 13	Paper II Presentation	Prepare Presentation
Apr 15	Paper II Presentation	Prepare Presentation
	South Africa: The Legacy of Apartheid	
Apr 18	Modern State formation	K&L pp. 461-472, TBA
Apr 20	Governance and Policymaking	K&L pp. 472-494
April 22	Easter Recess	None
Apr 25	Political Economy and Development	AE 5, 6; TBA
Apr 27	Recap: Summary and Conclusion	DC Chap 24

Key: AE Annual Editions
 DC Daniele Caramani
 K&L Kopstein and Lichbach
 TBA To Be Assigned