

**Political Science 150: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**DePaul University**  
**Autumn 2016**  
**T/Th 9:40-11:10 AM**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-4:00 PM, and by appointment  
Electronic Reserve page: <http://eres.lib.depaul.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=4697> (password: psc150)

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**Course Overview**

Why are some countries democratic and others not? Why have some countries become rich while others remain poor? And what difference does this make to one's security, opportunities, and quality of life? These are just some of the questions that we ask in the study of comparative politics.

This course is an introduction to the study of comparative politics. Comparative politics is the study of domestic politics of the countries around the world, focusing on the institutions, processes, and outcomes of different political systems around the world. In studying these different topics, we want to learn the "what's", "how's", and "why's" of each subject area—but we will also take the time to ask "what difference does it make?" Because this is an introductory course, we will survey a wide range of topics and countries without delving too deeply into any of them. Instead, you will be introduced to the most important concepts, theories, and issues in the study of comparative politics. You will also be introduced to some crucial methodological questions about how we study comparative politics and political science more generally.

**Course Objectives**

The primary objective of this course is to provide every student with the background and the conceptual tools necessary to analyze domestic politics around the globe. As such, this course will be organized around the major topics in comparative politics. When you complete this course, you should have a strong understanding of core concepts such as power, the state, democracy, legitimacy, development, and globalization. You will also develop your abilities to think critically about these concepts, to apply them empirically to relevant cases and situations, and to think about the American political system in comparative perspective.

**Grading**

Student grades will be determined by performance on the following elements:

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| • Quizzes & In-Class Activities | 15% |
| • Essays (3 x 15% each)         | 45% |
| • Simulation Performance        | 15% |
| • Final Exam                    | 25% |

NOTE: I do not grade attendance, and therefore you do not need to provide me with excuses for your occasional absences. I prefer to view you as capable of making your own decisions about how to use your time, and so it is not up to me to judge if your reason for missing class was valid. If personal, medical, or family hardships cause you to miss an extended amount of class, to be unable to meet deadlines, or to struggle with your studies in general, then you should contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible (LPC: Student Center Suite 307, 5-7290; Loop: DePaul Center Suite 11001, 2-8066). I will absolutely work with you to find a way to accommodate your difficulties, but only with notification from the Dean of Students' office. If you participate in an official DePaul extracurricular activity (such as an athletic team, Mock Trial, etc), which will require you to miss class time, then you must provide me with a letter from your coach or academic adviser specifying the missed dates and reasons *in advance*.

**Country Assignments:** After the add period has ended, each student will be assigned an advanced industrial state and a developing state for the remainder of the quarter. Students will be responsible for researching those two states throughout the quarter as we cover new concepts in order to examine how those apply to each state. Doing so will give each student a chance to develop substantive knowledge about two states in the world as well as to practice applying concepts to specific cases. Your state assignments will be “fair game” for questions during class time, in-class quizzes and activities, and the essay assignments. Therefore, students should continually research and familiarize themselves with these states. As a starting point, the CIA World Factbook is a good option, and most Wikipedia articles are reasonably accurate (many will have a specific article on the state’s politics). I also recommend consulting high-quality international publications such as *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, and other such publications throughout the world (feel free to consult me if you need help finding sources).

**Quizzes & In-Class Activities:** Throughout the quarter, there will be occasional (and unannounced) short quizzes and brief in-class writing assignments (both individual and small-group). These will require you to engage with the assigned course readings and materials, and to apply ideas effectively. For the purposes of grading, your lowest score will be dropped. Please note that I do not give make-up quizzes or activities.

**Essays:** There will be three short essay assignments (of 3-4 pages) with due dates throughout the quarter. The prompts, due dates, and requirements can be found on the last page of the syllabus.

**Simulation Performance:** All students will participate in a simulated “constitutional convention” that will occur over two class days. Each student will be assigned to one of political groups negotiating to design a constitution for a post-authoritarian state. Students will be required to participate actively in the simulation on both days, to write and bring to class memos at the start of each simulation activity offering recommendations for the group’s bargaining strategy, and to prepare for the activity by consulting readings, course notes, and actual historical examples of post-authoritarian constitutional design.

**Final Exam:** In lieu of an in-class final exam, students will submit a take-home essay exam of about 5-7 double-spaced pages. The assignment will be comprehensive and require students to reflect upon what they have learned in the course and to apply ideas and concepts drawn from course materials. The assignment will be handed out during the final class meeting and will be due on **November 17 at 5:00 PM**.

**Final Grades:** The **minimum** grade needed to earn each letter grade is as follows: A (94.0), A- (90.0), B+ (87.0), B (84.0), B- (80.0), C+ (77.0), C (74.0), C- (70.0), D+ (67.0), D (60.0), F (59.9 and below). To receive a grade of Pass, students must earn a C (74.0).

### **Organization of the Course**

This course is organized into several topics. The first topic introduces the logic and methodology of comparative politics; the remaining topics survey important areas of study in comparative politics. This course is thematic and social scientific. In other words, we will approach the topic by examining different areas of inquiry rather than by studying different countries. Instead, we will consider different countries and events to examine and illustrate these topics. This course is social scientific in that we will seek to answer questions and explain puzzles. We will approach each topic by considering several “what, how, why” questions.

The course material is divided into several complementary parts. Class notes are available on D2L for each topic after we finish. One or more readings are also assigned for each topic. Class meetings will include a combination of lecture, discussion, group activities, and simulations. Normally, but not always, we will devote time to discussing these readings in class. It is important to note that we will not cover all of the material from the notes or readings in class; you must complete all of these assignments in order to do well in this course.

**Readings:** There is a required textbook for this course. It is *Comparative Politics*, by David J. Samuels, Pearson (ISBN: 978-0-321-44974-0). It is available through the bookstore, and there is a copy of the book available on

reserve at the library. In addition, there are a number of additional required readings in the form of book chapters or articles. These are available via Electronic Reserve at the link provided at the top of the first page. You are **required** to complete these readings prior to the assigned date, and information from these readings will be included class discussion and quiz questions. Note that I provided full bibliographic details for most readings, so you should be able to access them even if the library webpage is not working for some reason.

### **Policies and Procedures**

**Instructor Contact:** I hold regular weekly office hours at the times listed at the top of the first page of the syllabus. You are strongly encouraged to drop by at any time during these hours; you do not need to make an appointment or let me know in advance. If you cannot drop by during office hours, I am happy to schedule another time that works for both of us. I hope that you will consider coming by at least once during the quarter; I enjoy talking to students and want to help each of you do well in this course. You are especially urged to contact me *as soon as possible* if you have questions or concerns about course material, your performance, my expectations, etc, or if other problems are arising that are affecting your ability to do the coursework. However, I also encourage students to drop by just to discuss interests or topics related to the course.

**Desire2Learn:** I use D2L as a means to post announcements readings, notes, and other course materials (including a back-up copy of this syllabus). You will also use D2L's dropbox feature to submit the simulation paper and final exam. You should plan on accessing D2L regularly (at least once between each class meeting). Because I will occasionally use D2L to send mass emails to the class, you should make sure that the system has your correct email address and that you check it regularly.

**Disabilities:** Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact me privately as early as possible during the quarter. I take these concerns seriously and will do what I can within reason and in compliance with university policy to help. All discussions will remain confidential. In order to receive the most appropriate accommodations, you must also contact either the Plus Program (for LD, AD/HD) or the Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677 (Student Center #370).

**Academic Dishonesty:** In academia, ideas are everything, and so presenting the words or ideas of others as your own is theft. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will result *at a minimum* in a grade of 0 on the assignment and a report to the Academic Affairs Office. Any work that you submit must be your own, and you must cite the sources of ideas or words that are not your own. If you have doubt about what constitutes a violation, consult the *Code of Student Responsibility* in the Student Handbook and/or consult me. Ignorance is never an excuse. Be aware of the following: making slight changes to the wording of another person's work without citing it is plagiarism; rules about plagiarism apply both to published and unpublished works; and submitting work that you have prepared for another course at DePaul or elsewhere in whole or part is cheating.

**Classroom Decorum:** As one of many students enrolled in this course, you have a shared responsibility to foster a constructive learning environment and to refrain from behavior that would hinder the ability of those around you to learn or for me to teach. These guidelines are for your own good, but they are also a matter of showing respect to your classmates and your instructor. At a minimum, you should:

- Arrive on time, stay in class until the end, and wait until class is over to put away materials
- Turn off the ringer on your mobile phone and put it away for the duration of class
- Use your laptop only for taking notes or accessing course materials.
- Refrain from eating food, talking, passing notes, reading the paper, etc
- Act respectfully and courteously towards your classmates.

**NOTE:** Laptops are not allowed during class meetings except when conducting group/simulation work or with documentation from the Center for Students with Disabilities.

**Late Assignments:** Due dates for assignments are firm, and they are there to provide a fair environment for all students. If you submit work after the due date, it will be penalized by a minimum of 10 points (i.e., one letter grade) for each 24 hours that it is late. I may not accept any work submitted more than 72 hours after the deadline without documentation.

**Student Responsibility:** It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and understand all requirements, due dates, policies, and announcements that I provide in this syllabus, announce in class or via email, or post on D2L—whether you were in attendance on a given day or not. It is also your responsibility to get notes from classmates if you miss class; I will not provide one-on-one reviews for students missing class. A copy of the syllabus is posted on D2L, and copies of any materials or links that we used in class are either on D2L (after class) or available from me. The full citation for each reading is provided in this syllabus so that you can always find the reading directly if the Electronic Reserve system is not working. Finally, please do not wait until the last minute to deal with any concerns or problems with the course.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

**Sept. 8 (Thursday):** Overview of course: Why study comparative politics?

**Sept. 13 (Tuesday):** Comparative politics as a field

- Textbook, Chapter 1

**Sept. 15 (Thursday):** The State

- Textbook, pp. 28-43, 230-5

**Sept. 20 (Tuesday):** The State

- Textbook, pp. 44-57
- Adam B. Ellick & Pir Zubair Shah. "Hard-Line Islam Fills Void in Pakistan's Flood Response." *New York Times* August 6, 2010.

**Sept. 22 (Thursday):** Authoritarian Regimes

- Textbook, Chapter 4

**Sept. 27 (Tuesday):** Authoritarian Regimes

- Jennifer Gandhi. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 ("Three Illustrative Cases"), pp. 42-72.

**Sept. 29 (Thursday):** The Special Case of Islam & Democracy?

- Textbook, pp. 182-190
- Fareed Zakaria. 2004. "Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism." *Political Science Journal* 119 (1): 1-20.

**Oct. 4 (Tuesday):** Discussion of Essay #1 in class

- **Essay #1 Due at start of class on D2L (either bring a copy or your laptop to discuss in class)**

**Oct. 6 (Thursday):** Democracy

- Textbook, pp. 58-65
- Schmitter & Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...And Is Not." *Journal of Democracy* 2 (3): 75-88.

**Oct. 11 (Tuesday):** Democratization

- Textbook, pp. 119-140, 190-198

**Oct. 13 (Thursday):** Comparing Democracies

- Textbook, pp. 67-90

**Oct. 18 (Tuesday):** The Reverse Wave?

- Steven Levitsky & Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 51-65.

**Oct. 20 (Thursday):** Comparative Political Economy

- Textbook, pp. 285-293, 315-344

**Oct. 25 (Tuesday):** Discussion of Essay #2 in class

- **Essay #2 due at the start of class on D2L (either bring a copy or your laptop to discuss in class)**

**Oct. 27 (Thursday):** Economic Development

- Textbook, pp. 304-314
- Collier & Gunning. 1999. "Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13 (3): 3-22.

**Nov. 1 (Tuesday):** Globalization

- Textbook, Chapter 13
- Paul Krugman. 1997. "In Praise of Cheap Labor." *Slate* March 20, 1997.

**Nov. 3 (Thursday):** Simulation

- **Memo #1 due on D2L at the start of class**

**Nov. 8 (Tuesday):** Simulation

- **Memo #2 due on D2L at the start of class**

**Nov. 10 (Thursday):** Globalization & Democracy

- Dani Rodrik. 2000. "How Far Will International Economic Integration Go?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14 (1): 177-186.

**Nov. 15 (Tuesday):** Discuss Essay #3 in class today

- **Essay #3 due on D2L at the start of class today (either bring a copy or your laptop to class to discuss)**
- Distribute take-home final exam

**Nov. 17 (Thursday)**

- **Take-Home Final Exam due at 5:00 PM**

## Essay Questions:

**Essay #1 (due October 4):** Research the developing state that you have been assigned. Is it an authoritarian system? If so, explain how (i.e., who rules and how do they obtain power?) and why (i.e., how does this system of governance fit with our definition of authoritarianism).

**Essay #2 (due October 25):** Research the advanced industrial state that you have been assigned. Is it a democracy? In answering this question, be sure to consider the various definitional aspects of democracy that we have examined (i.e., do not just focus on elections). Are there undemocratic aspects of its political system?

**Essay #3 (due November 15):** Last week, we conducted an in-class simulation that produced a new constitution for a developing, post-authoritarian state. Evaluate the final constitutional settlement as a student of comparative politics (i.e., not as a member of your simulation group). Is the proposed constitution likely to produce a successful political system? Why or why not? Explain by referring to concepts and ideas that we have studied this quarter.

## Guidelines:

- Essays should be submitted on D2L prior to the start of class on the due date. They must be submitted in pdf format.
- Each essay should be about 4 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font, etc). It may be no longer 5 pages.
- Cite your research. Use in-text citations and a Works Cited page following the Chicago “Author-Date” method ([http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)) to document any evidence or arguments that are not your own. If the article does not have an identifiable author, then include a brief one-two word identifier (e.g., “CIA Factbook”), which you then list in the Works Cited page.
- The emphasis of these essays is on the application of concepts and analysis, rather than description. Because I am the reader, you may assume that I know the basic details of the political system you are analyzing. So use the space available to you to analyze the system per the prompt rather than to describe it in detail.
- Essays will be graded on: the accuracy and appropriate use of course concepts (40%), evidence of critical thinking in applying these concepts to each case (40%), and the quality of writing (20%).