PS 350: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Course Aims

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the study of comparative politics. It is designed to provide an overview of the most important theoretical approaches to this subject as well as examine the political history of individual countries. The central goal of the course will be to seek an understanding of political development in various regions of the world. Given the global changes since the end of the Cold War, and more recently, the events of September 11, the course focuses on those broad issues which dominate contemporary comparative politics: the ability of the state to govern its citizens, the factors that facilitate or hinder democratization, and the goal of exporting democracy to non-Western societies. Throughout the semester, we will compare how different societies have attempted to deal with these issues. Because we want to cover as many topics as possible, we will be moving quite quickly during the course of the semester and I would encourage you to keep up with the readings to get the most out of the course.

Course Requirements

Class Participation and Attendance

Your daily participation is one of the most important features of this course and accounts for 20% of your grade. Each of us will bring different ideas and bits of knowledge to class discussions and the course is designed for us to share our different opinions in an intense, yet polite, manner. I do not claim to dispense Truth with respect to comparative politics, and it is my hope that we will learn from each other over the course of the semester. Thus, there will be very few traditional lectures given. Instead, each class I will choose - at random - two to three students to lead class discussion for that day. I will ask questions concerning the assigned readings and students will be expected to have read the material closely enough to respond in a thoughtful manner. Because you never know when your number may turn up, it is best to be prepared each class for your turn in the “hot seat.” Your class participation grade will depend on how prepared you are when you are one of the leaders of class discussion. I encourage you to take notes on the assigned readings and use these to help you answer questions, but you will not be allowed to re-read the text during the discussion. You are allowed to decline your role as class leader one time without any penalty, but more than this will affect (in a negative way) your class participation grade. While this process may seem intimidating at first, it will become more familiar to you over the course of the semester and will help you learn how to construct, and deconstruct, arguments. This, by the way, will prove to be helpful for the midterm, the writing assignments, and the final exam.

Regular attendance is required for this course and more than one absence will lower your participation will be lowered 5% for each subsequent absence unless you provide a verifiable written excuse from a doctor.

Arriving late to class, and receiving cell phone calls during class, is disruptive and rude. Your class participation and attendance grade will be lowered if you consistently come to class late or if you receive calls during class.

Examinations

The midterm will be on Wednesday, October 19 and will cover all the material assigned up to that date unless specified differently by the instructor. The midterm will include identification terms, short essays,
and a long essay. The final will be on **Friday, December 19 from 8 am – 10 am**. Both the midterm and the final are closed book exams. Students will not be allowed to leave the classroom for any reason during the exam. Under no circumstances, unless serious medical or family emergency, will you be allowed to take the midterm or final at an earlier or later date.

**Book Quizzes**

There will be three book quizzes on **November 16, November 30, and December 9**. The quizzes will ask basic questions about the reading and will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and term identification questions.

**Country Report**

In order for you to apply the concepts learned this semester, you will each complete a country report that will analyze the process of democratization in a particular country. You will choose your country from a list provided by the professor no later than **Monday, October 10**. The report will be 7-10 pages in length (double-spaced, one-inch margins, and 12 point font) and will be due on **Monday, December 12**. I will provide more information about the country report during the second week of class.

**Keeping Informed**

While there is no requirement that you pay closer attention to the news this semester, you will get much more out of this class if you try to read at least one major newspaper a day. You can access the following newspapers online for free: The New York Times (**www.nytimes.com**), The Washington Post (**www.washingtonpost.com**), and The Los Angeles Times (**www.latimes.com**).

I have registered the class at the New York Times website if you would like to receive a daily subscription to the paper for a reduced rate. If you are interested, visit **www.nytimes.com/student** and search for University of San Diego and my name. You can also order a subscription over the phone at 1-888-NYTCOLL.

I have established a web page for this course that contains links to many interesting sites related to comparative politics and individual country histories. You can find it at: **http://home.sandiego.edu/~jmwilliams**

**Grading**

- Midterm: 20%
- Final: 40%
- Participation: 20%
- Country Report: 10%
- Book Quizzes: 10%

All assignments are due in class on the specified due date. You may not email assignments unless I have given you prior permission. Assignments that are not turned in on the specified due date will be graded down one full grade per day and the assignment will not be accepted after three days unless students notify me before and have a written verifiable medical excuse. Those who present me with a verifiable medical excuse will be allowed to take a makeup exam that will be scheduled for the last day of the semester and will be allowed to turn in late assignments without penalty on a date chosen by the professor.

**Academic Integrity**

I expect you to comply fully with the standards of academic integrity set forth by the University of San Diego. Any incident of academic dishonesty (as defined in the Undergraduate Bulletin) will be punished to the full extent allowed by the University.
Books and Other Materials

All of these books should be available in the bookstore. The other materials for the course are on E-Reserve and traditional reserve with Copley Library. These materials are designated with an “ER” in the syllabus and the password for this course is: ps350. Please notify me as soon as possible if any of these materials are not available.

- Joel Migdal, Strong Societies and Weak States
- Fareed Zakaria, The Future of Freedom
- Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work
- Michael Schatzberg, Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa
- Amy Chua, World on Fire
- Readings available on E-Reserve [ER]

Course Outline and Assigned Readings

Section I: Understanding Political Development and Comparative Analysis

Sept. 2: Introduction to course
Sept. 5: NO CLASS
Sept. 7: Tyler, “Global Kaleidoscope”; Freedom House 2005 Rankings; World Bank Social and Economic Indicators; Bush, “Iraqi Democracy Will Succeed” (ER)
Sept. 9: Coleman, “Modernization: Political Aspects” (ER); Fang, “Nomads no more” (ER); Garwood, “Bedouin Lifestyle Fades as Modernity Intrudes” (ER)

Section II: State-Building and State-Society Relations

Sept. 12: Migdal, Chapter 1
Sept. 14: Migdal, Chapter 2
Sept. 16: Migdal, Chapter 3
Sept. 19: Migdal, Chapter 4
Sept. 21: Migdal, Chapter 5
Sept. 23: Migdal, Chapters 6-7
Sept. 26: Bendix, “Nation-Building: Russia” (ER)
Sept. 28: Bendix, “Nation-Building: Japan” (ER)
Sept. 30: Huntington, “Political Modernization: America vs. Europe” (ER)

Section III: Democracy I: Definition, Transition, and Consolidation

Oct. 5: Zakaria, Introduction and Chapters 1-2; Schmitter and Karl, “What Democracy is…and is not” (ER)

Oct. 10: Huntington, “Democracy’s Third Wave” (ER)

**Country Selections Due**


Oct. 14: Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm” (ER)

Oct. 17: Schedler, “What is Democratic Consolidation?” (ER)

Oct. 19: **MIDTERM**

Oct. 21: **MOVIE**

**Section IV: Democracy II: Political Economy**


Oct. 26: Varshney, “Why Democracy Survives” (ER)

Oct. 28: Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” (ER)

**Section V: Democracy III: Institutions**


Nov. 2: Juan Linz, “Presidential vs. Parliamentary Democracy: A Debate”; Fish, “Putin’s Path” (ER)

Nov. 4: The Economist, “The gavel and the robe”; Brown, “Judicial Review and the Arab World” (ER)

Nov. 7: Lijphart, “The Consensus Model of Democracy” (ER)

Nov. 9: Bohn, “Consociationalism and the Case of Switzerland”; Henderson, “Comment: Consociationalism and the Case of Switzerland” (ER)

**Section VI: Democracy IV: Political Culture**

Nov. 11: Almond and Verba, “An Approach to Political Culture” and “Profiles of Nations and Groups” (ER)

Nov. 14: Inglehart, “Modernization and Postmodernization in 43 Societies” (ER)

Nov. 16: Putnam (entire)

**Book Quiz #1**

Nov. 18: **NO CLASS/COUNTRY REPORT RESEARCH**
Nov. 21: Freitag, “Social Capital in (Dis)Similar Democracies: The Development of Generalized Trust in Japan and Switzerland” (ER)

Nov. 23: Zakaria, Chapter 4; Filal-Ansary, “The Sources of Enlightened Muslim Thought” (ER)

Nov. 25: NO CLASS


Nov. 30: Schatzberg (entire)
Book Quiz #2

Section VII: State Collapse and Exporting Democracy


Dec. 7: Abraham, “Dancing with the Chameleon: Sierra Leone and the Elusive Quest for Peace” (ER)

Dec. 9: Chua (entire)
Book Quiz #3

Dec. 12: Diamond, “Why we must feed the hands that could bite us” (ER); Diamond, “Lessons from Iraq”
Country Report Due

Dec. 19 FINAL EXAM (8-10 AM)